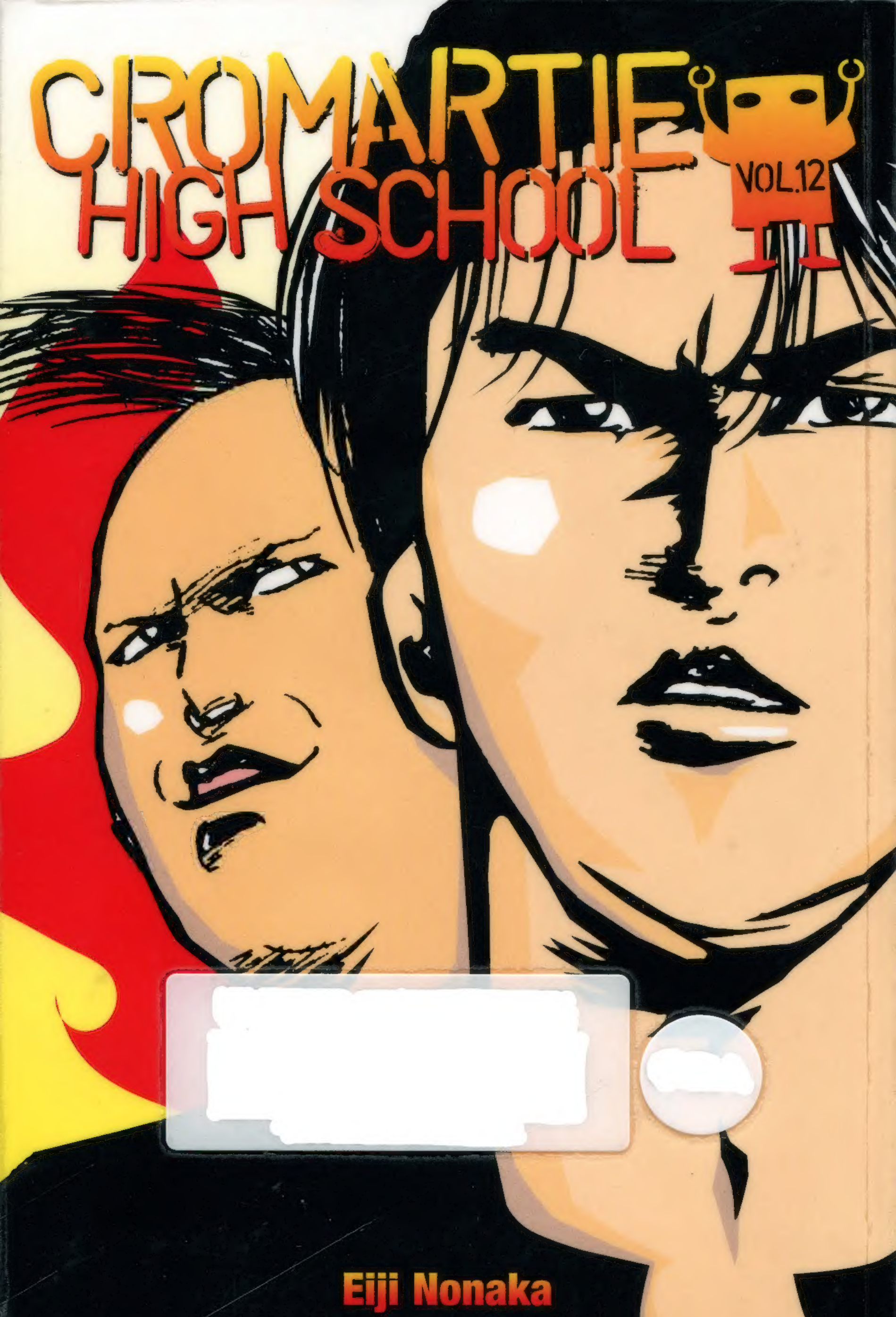
# CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL

VOL.12



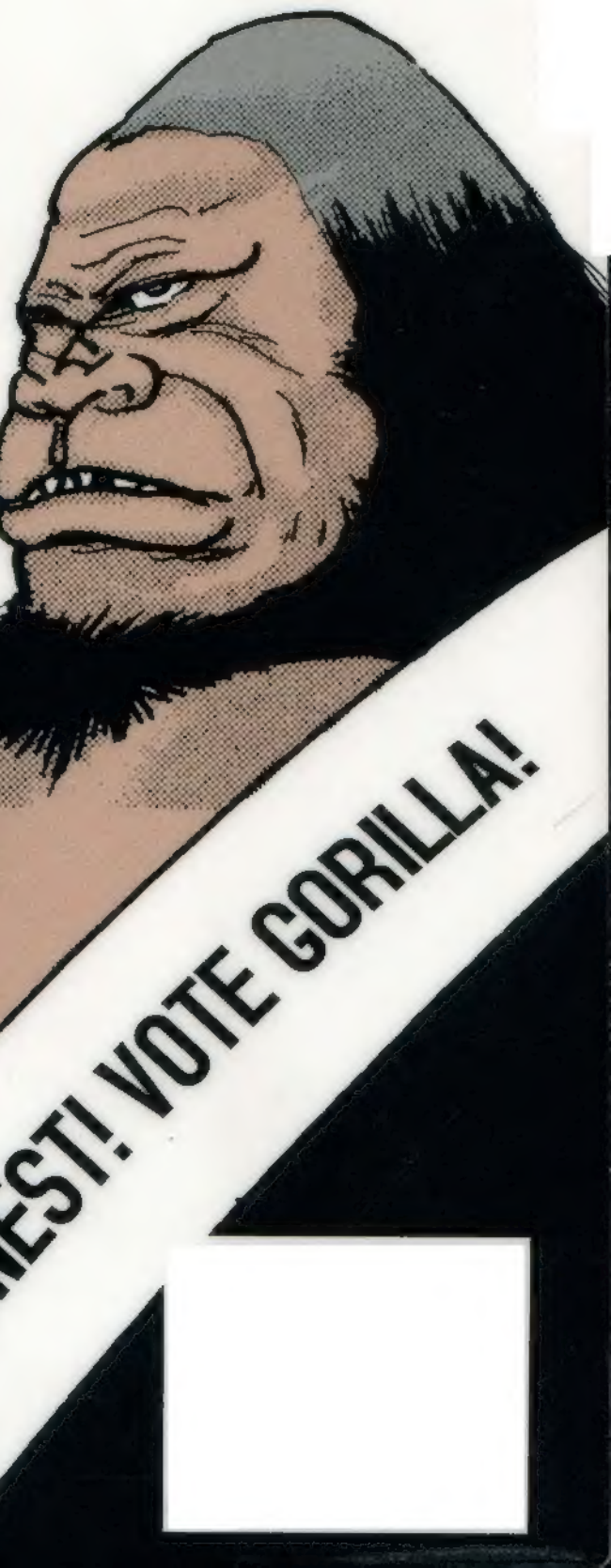
Eiji Nonaka

# CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL

WINNER OF THE Kodansha Manga Award

Summer has descended upon Cromartie High, and the students are lining up to take off their clothes...

...to join the school sumo club. Masked Takenouchi becomes the club's rising star, and the Four Great Ones (all five of them!) find themselves impromptu goodwill ambassadors, explaining the finer points of loincloths to a series of foreign guests. You know you're curious.

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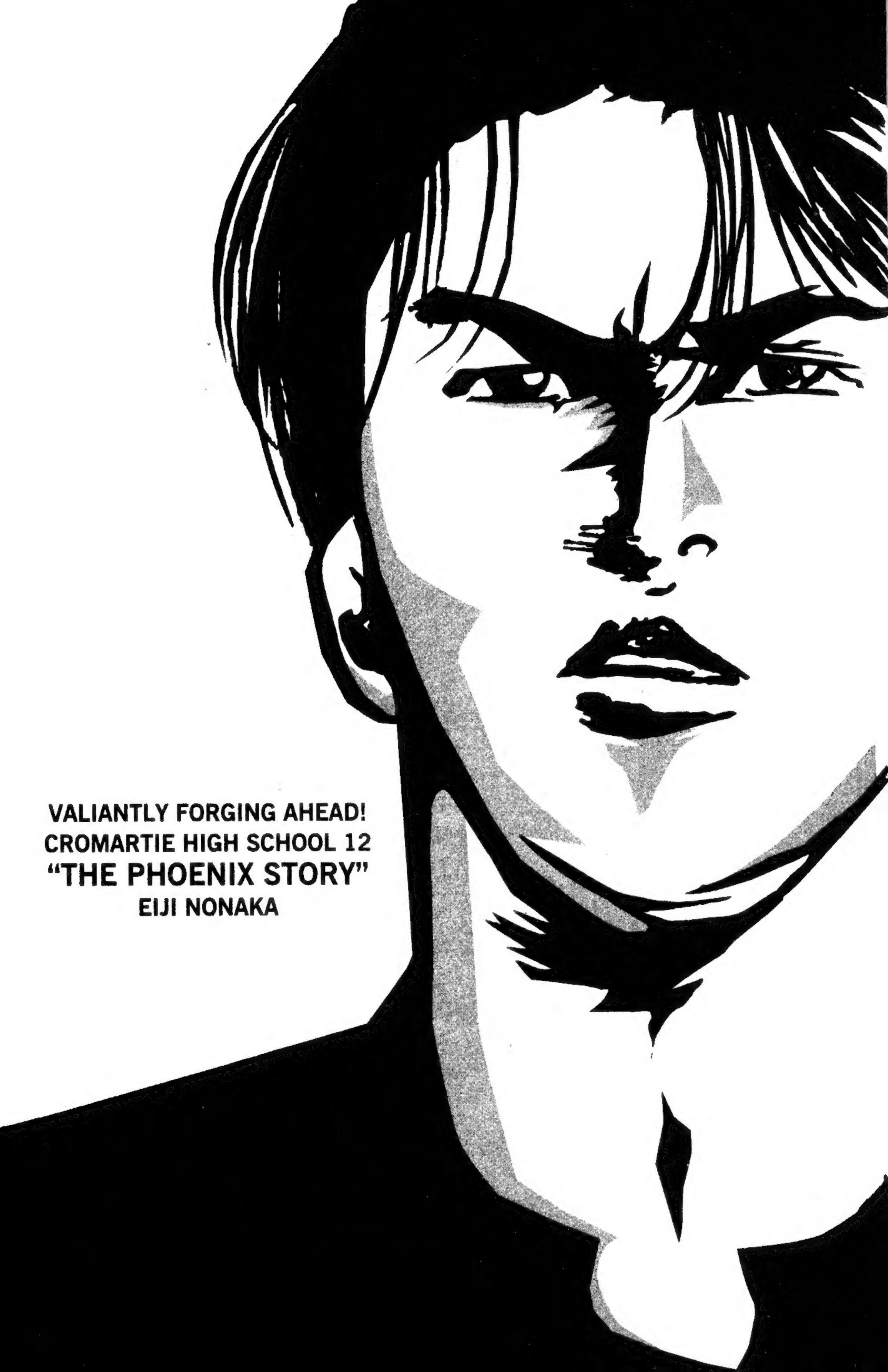
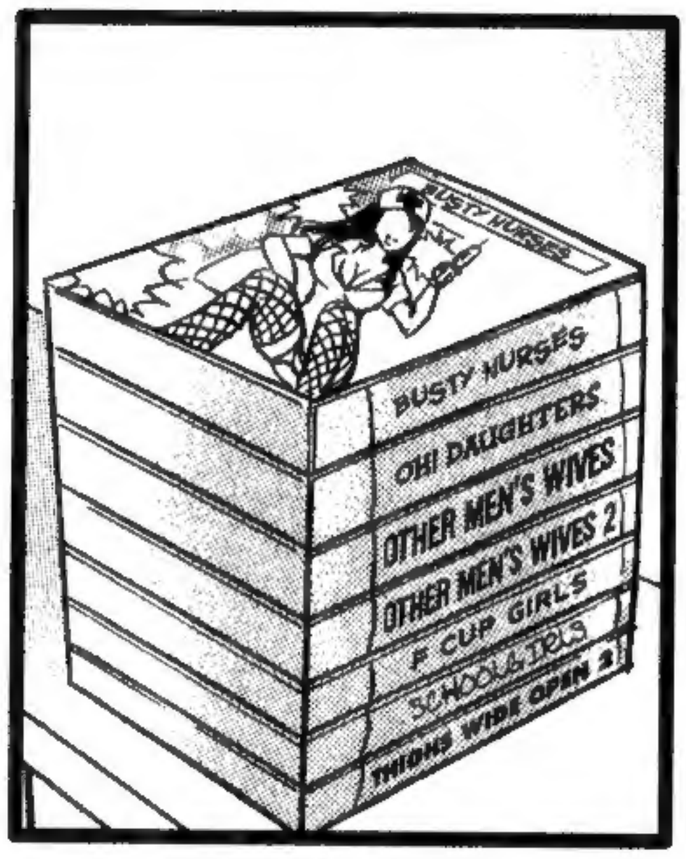


**VALIANTLY FORGING AHEAD!**
**CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL 12**
**"THE PHOENIX STORY"**
**EIJI NONAKA**



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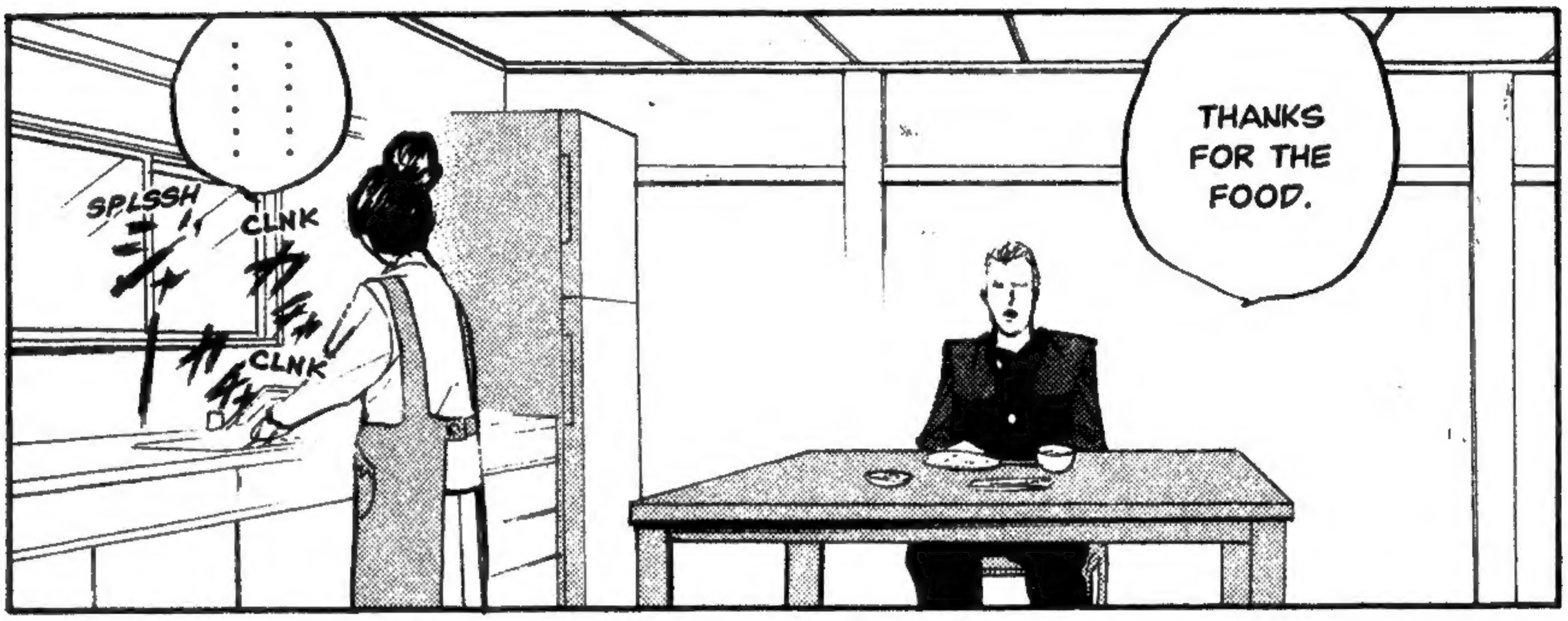
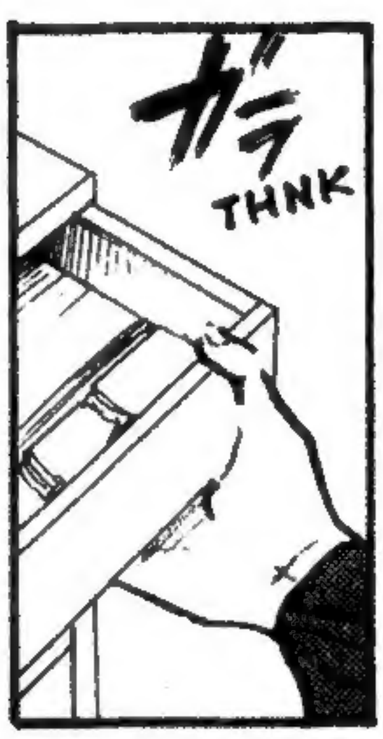
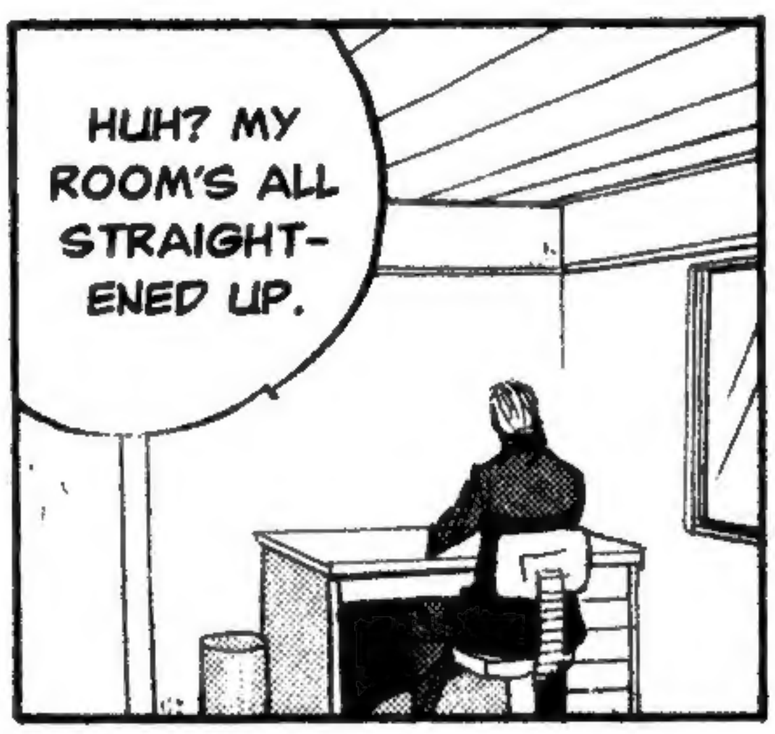
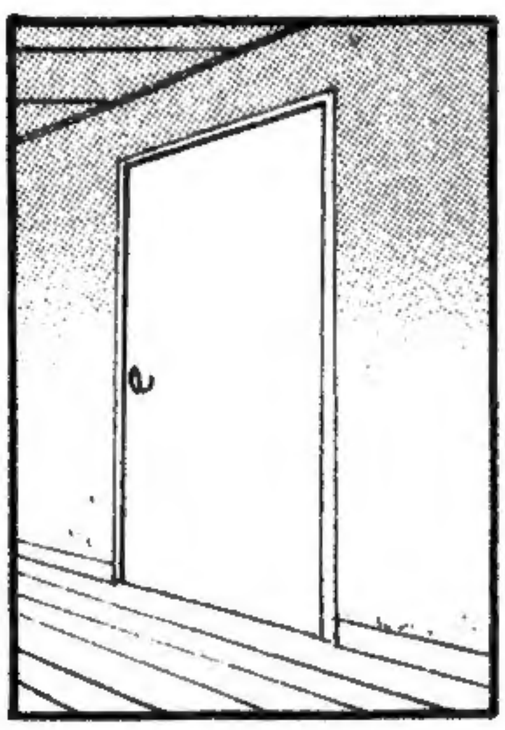
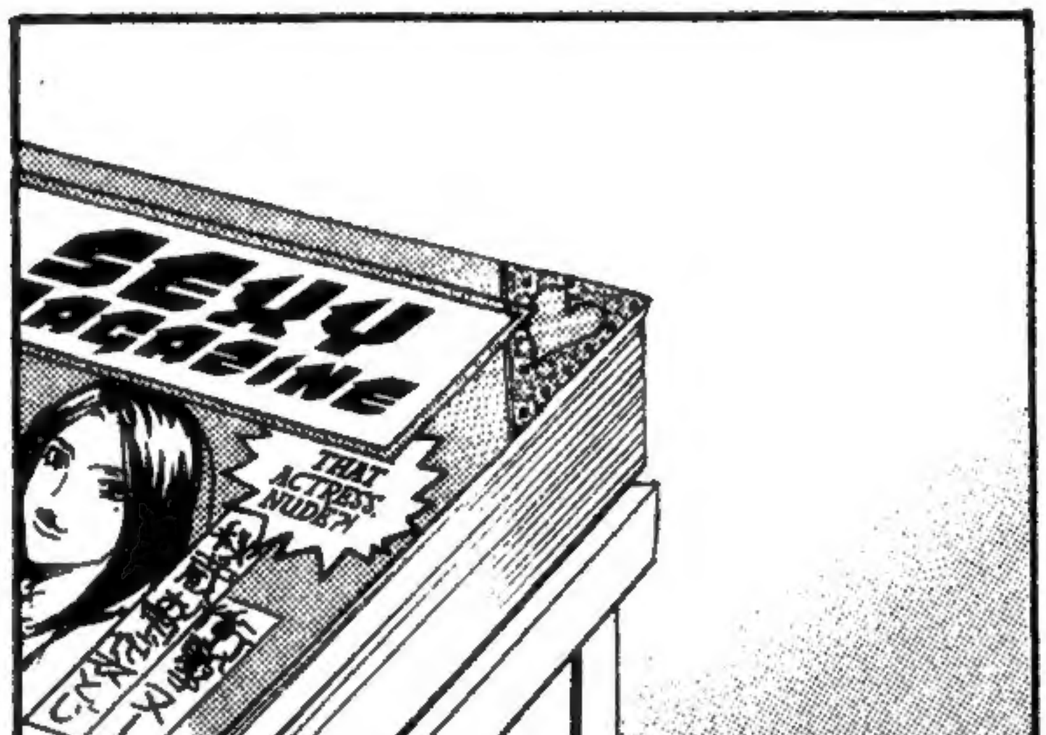
# CHAPTER 239: **GIRLS ON FILM**









SHE EVEN STRAIGHTENED UP MY PORNO MAGS!

AAAAGH!

RIGHT?

IT'D PROBABLY BE LESS TROUBLE IF YOU GOT YELLED AT OR SOMETHING.

IT'S GOTTA BE TOUGH HAVING YOUR STUFF RE-ARRANGED AND NOT TALKING ABOUT IT.

AH.

YEAH, SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO ME THE OTHER DAY.

IF YOU WANNA DIE OVER SOMETHING LIKE **THIS**, YOU COULD HAVE ALL THE LIVES IN THE WORLD AND IT WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH FOR YOUR ASS.

YOU'RE AN IDIOT.

THIS HAS GOTTA BE WHAT IT FEELS LIKE WHEN PEOPLE SAY THEY JUST WANT TO DIE...

THIS HAS REALLY GOT ME DEPRESSED. I COULDN'T SLEEP AT ALL LAST NIGHT.

I DON'T KNOW. I THINK MAEDA'S SUFFERED A PRETTY BIG SHOCK...

THIS PORNO MAG INCIDENT OF YOURS IS NOTHING.

YEAH. THERE ARE A LOT MORE EMBARRASSING THINGS OUT THERE.

THINK, HAYASHIDA. SURE, NORMALLY YOU COULD FORGET SOMETHING LIKE THIS IN A COUPLE DAYS, BUT THIS IS HIS MOM WE'RE TALKING ABOUT!

BECAUSE SOMEONE SAW HIS PORN STASH? SO WHAT?!

NOW IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD FEEL LIKE TO HAVE HIS MOM ARRANGE YOUR PORNO MAGS.

. . . . . .

EVERYONE, THINK **REAAALLY** HARD. GET A GOOD PICTURE OF MAEDA'S MOM IN YOUR HEADS.

HEY, DAMMIT! THIS SOUNDS SORT OF LIKE YOU'RE INSULTING MY FAMILY!

I COULD HANDLE IT IF IT WAS MY MOM, BUT **MAEDA'S** MOM? NO WAY.

YEAH, IT'S PRETTY BAD.

AARGH! I CAN'T STAND IT!

YEAH, THAT'S A GOOD IDEA!

LET US MAKE IT UP TO YOU. WE SHOULD ALL SHARE AN EMBARRASSING EXPERIENCE WE'VE HAD IN THE PAST.

SORRY 'BOUT THAT.

NOW I'M EVEN MORE DE-PRESSED.

HUH. AND?

THE TRUTH IS...NOT LONG AGO, I WENT ON A DOUBLE DATE.

JUST LEAVE IT TO ME!

YOU FIRST.

. . . . . .

SO THE FOUR OF US GO INTO THIS COFFEE SHOP...

THE TWO GIRLS KNEW EACH OTHER, BUT ME AND THE OTHER GUY WERE COMPLETE STRANGERS.

DO YOU MIND?

I GUESS THEY HAD A LOT OF CATCHING UP TO DO. THEY WERE CHATTING AND GETTING ALL EXCITED AND STUFF.

OH, AND THE TWO GIRLS WERE OLD FRIENDS WHO HADN'T SEEN EACH OTHER IN A LONG TIME.

AH. EXACTLY HOW LONG?

YES, IT IS A PRETTY LONG STORY.

THAT'S VERY PER-CEPTIVE OF YOU!

IT SEEMS THIS STORY IS GOING TO BE RATHER LONG.

NO GOOD! THAT'S FAR TOO LONG!

IF IT WERE A MANGA, PROBABLY ABOUT 12 PAGES.

WELL, LET ME SEE...

LET'S HEAR IT, HAYA-SHIDA.

FINE! I'VE GOT A SHORT STORY THAT'S JUST THE THING!

OH. SORRY.

YOU'LL HAVE TO CONDENSE IT, OR SIMPLY HEARING IT ALL WILL BE EXTREMELY TAXING. IDEALLY, IT SHOULD FIT ON A SINGLE SHEET OF PAPER AND BE 400 WORDS OR LESS.

A MANHOLE?

AND I FELL DOWN A MANHOLE.

THE OTHER DAY, I WAS OUT WALKING AROUND...

AND DOWN AT THE BOTTOM, THERE WAS THIS UNDERGROUND MONKEY KINGDOM.

IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF WHETHER WE BELIEVE YOU OR NOT. RATHER, IT'S NOT EXACTLY AN EMBARRASSING STORY, IS IT?

YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, DO YOU?

YEAH.

THAT'S IT?

NAH. THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO TELL.

ISN'T THERE A WAY YOU CAN WRAP IT UP IN JUST A FEW WORDS?

YOU KNOW WHAT ELSE, MAEDA? IF YOU WERE TO TELL THAT IN A MANGA, IT WOULD BE ONE LONG STORY!

GENTLEMEN, WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU IS EMBARRASSING STORIES. ANYTHING WILL BE FINE!

UNDERSTOOD. NOW LET'S SET THAT ASIDE FOR THE MOMENT.

I JUST FELL DOWN A MANHOLE AND THERE WERE SOME MONKEYS AT THE BOTTOM. THAT'S IT.

IT'S GONNA BE A DIFFICULT ONE TO TOP.

YEAH, BUT THAT PORNO MAG INCIDENT PACKS A PRETTY MEAN PUNCH, YOU KNOW.

MAEDA HAS ALREADY SHARED HIS STORY, AND IS NOW ALONE IN HIS EMBARRASSMENT! AT THIS RATE, THERE'LL BE NO HELPING HIM!

OK. IT'S SORT OF A TYPICAL STORY THOUGH.

GO ON, TELL US.

AH! Y'KNOW, I'VE GOT AN EMBARRASSING STORY ABOUT SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED TO ME AT THE VIDEO STORE.

YEAH, THAT WAS REALLY EMBARRASSING.

WELCOME.

I TAKE IT UP TO THE COUNTER, AND THERE'S THIS CUTE CHICK AT THE REGISTER.

CHECKIN' OUT A BIG STACK OF PORN.

SO I'M AT THE VIDEO STORE...

MAEDA'S STORY HAS THIS OVERWHELMING **POWER**. IT'S NOT YOUR TYPICAL KIND OF EMBARRASSING.

YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT.

COMPARED TO MAEDA'S STORY, IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE MUCH OF A BIG DEAL, HUH?

BUT IT'S A REALLY TYPICAL STORY. SORRY GUYS.

YEAH, THAT WOULD BE EMBAR-RASSING. THAT KIND OF STUFF HAPPENS SOMETIMES, HUH?

NOT LONG AGO, I WAS AT THE VIDEO STORE...

REALLY?

AH! I HAVE A PORN VIDEO STORY THAT'S EVEN MORE EMBARRASSING!

NO, HOLD ON A MINUTE. THIS IS WHERE MY STORY IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT.

THERE'S A CUTE CHICK AT THE REG-ISTER, RIGHT?

HEY! THIS IS THE SAME AS THAT STORY BEFORE!

AND I'VE GOT THIS HUGE STACK OF PORN THAT I'M CARRYING UP TO THE COUNTER.

AND THE GIRL BEHIND THE REGISTER IS SOMEONE I HAD A CRUSH ON IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

SO I TAKE THE VIDEOS TO THE COUNTER...

BUSTY NURSES
OH! DAUGHTERS
OTHER MEN'S WIVES
OTHER MEN'S WIVES 2
F CUP GIRLS
SCHOOLGIRLS
LEGS WIDE OPEN 2

MAEDA'S STORY HAS THIS OVERWHELMING **POWER**. IT'S NOT YOUR TYPICAL KIND OF EMBARRASSING.

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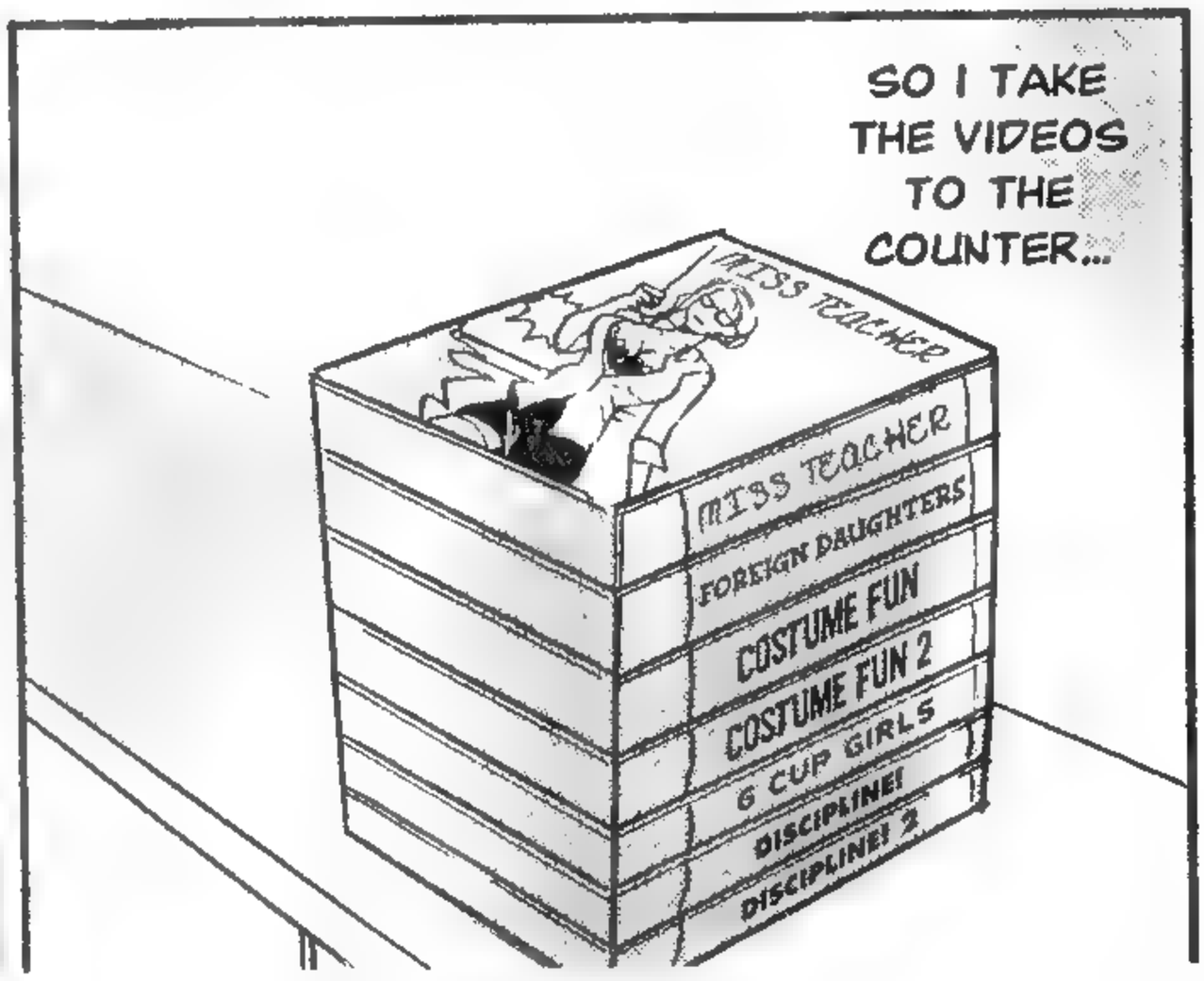


AND MAEDA'S MOM IS BEHIND THE COUNTER.

BEEP

I TOTALLY COULDN'T TAKE IT! I'M GETTING SCARED JUST IMAGINING IT!

RIGHT?

I'D BE SO EMBARRASSED I'D WANNA DIE!

AAAGH! NO WAY!

THAT'S NOT FRICKIN' TYPICAL AT ALL!

IT'S A REALLY TYPICAL STORY. SORRY.

STILL...

COMPARATIVELY SPEAKING, THAT THING WITH THE PORNO MAGS IS NOTHIN'!

YEAH, IT TOTALLY BLOWS AWAY MAEDA'S STORY.

OUT OF ALL THE STORIES WE'VE HEARD TODAY, HAYASHIDA'S HAS GOTTA BE THE MOST EMBARRASSING.

HUH?

YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS, MAEDA-KUN...

THAT'S RIGHT! YOURS AIN'T NOWHERE IN THE SAME LEAGUE AS HAYASHIDA'S!

IT WAS **REALLY** EMBAR-RASSING!

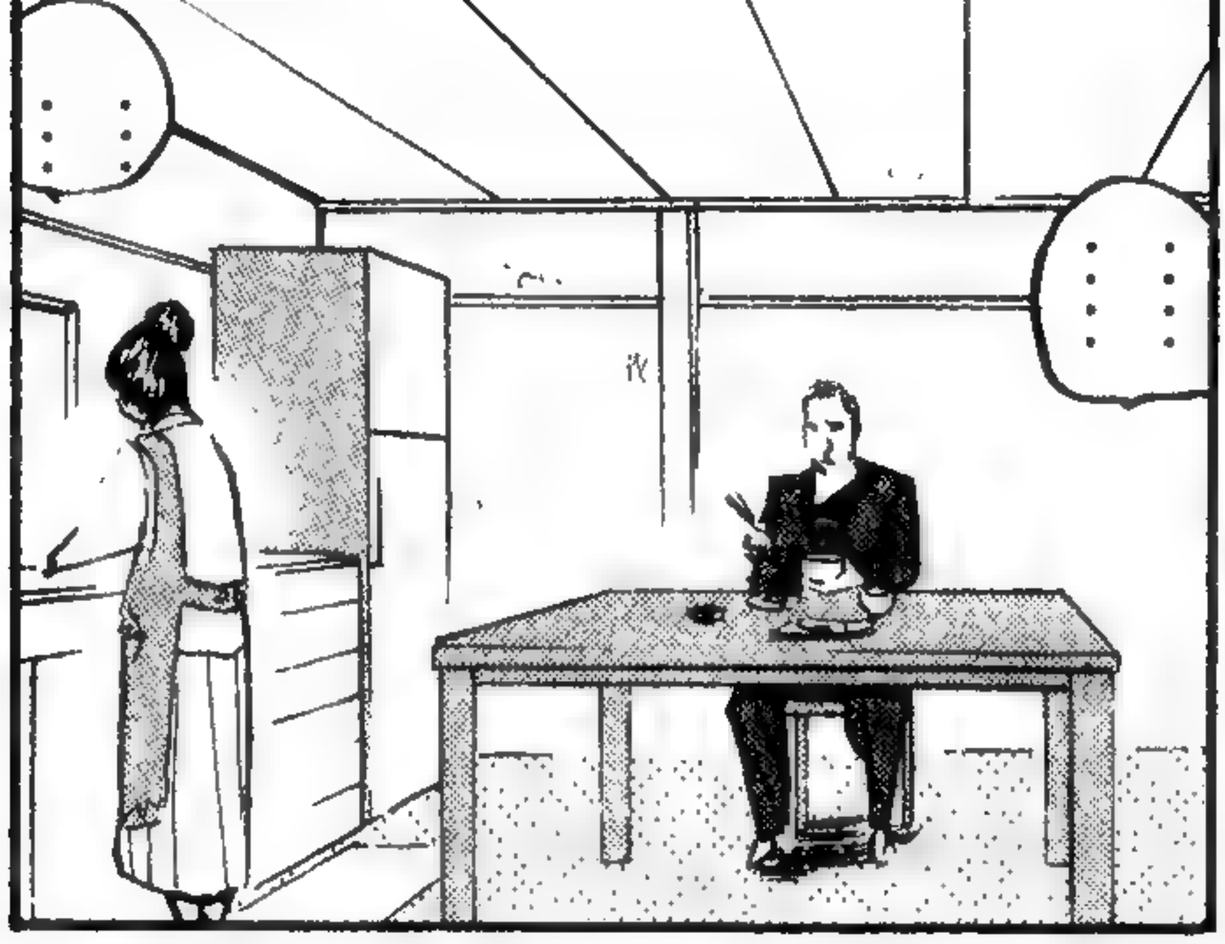
AH.

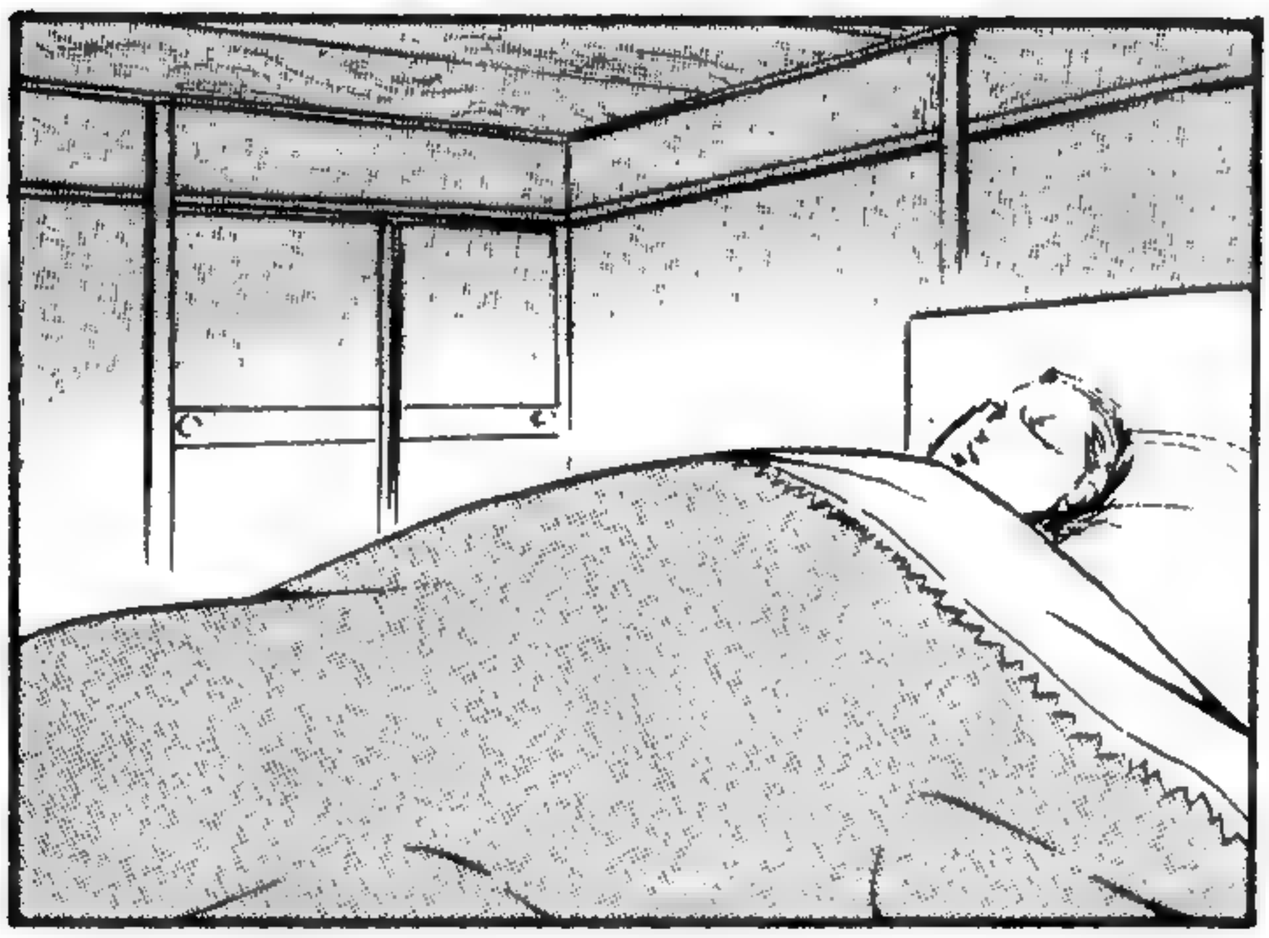
IT MEANS SOMEONE HAS HAD A MORE EMBARRASSING EXPERIENCE THAN YOU.

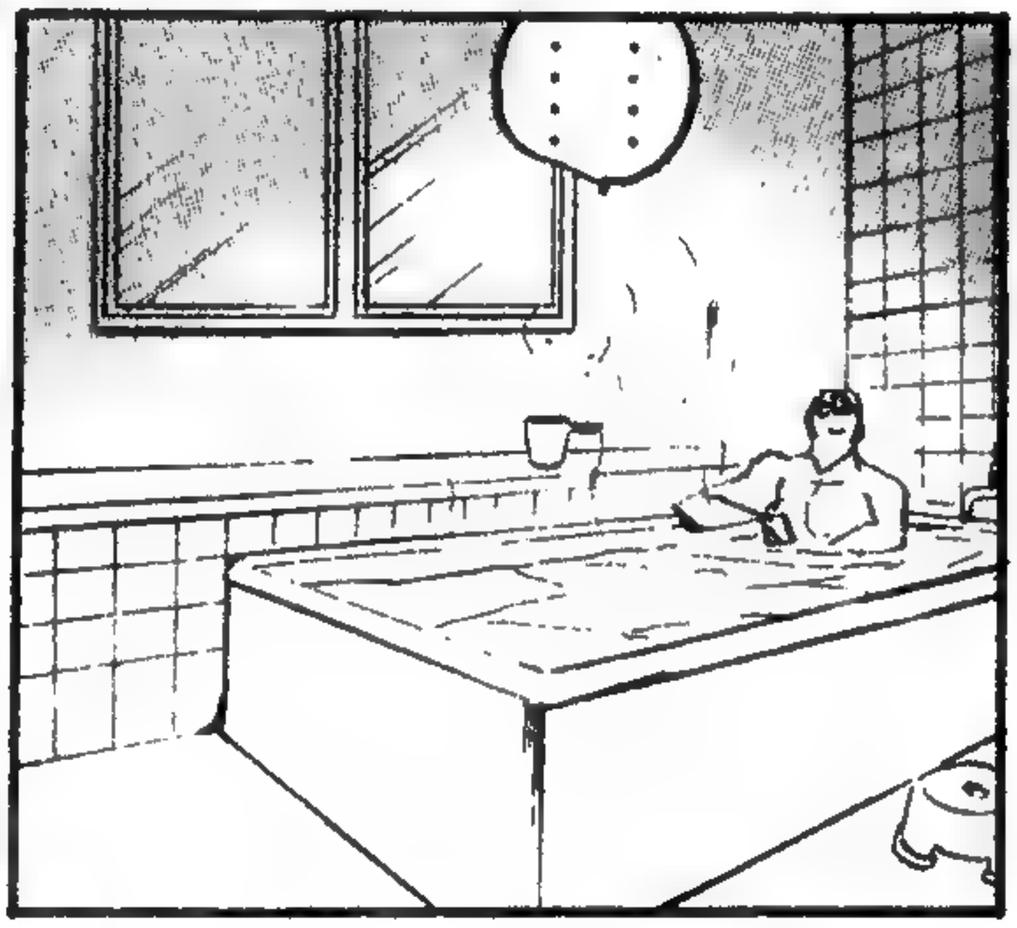
UM, OK. THANKS GUYS.

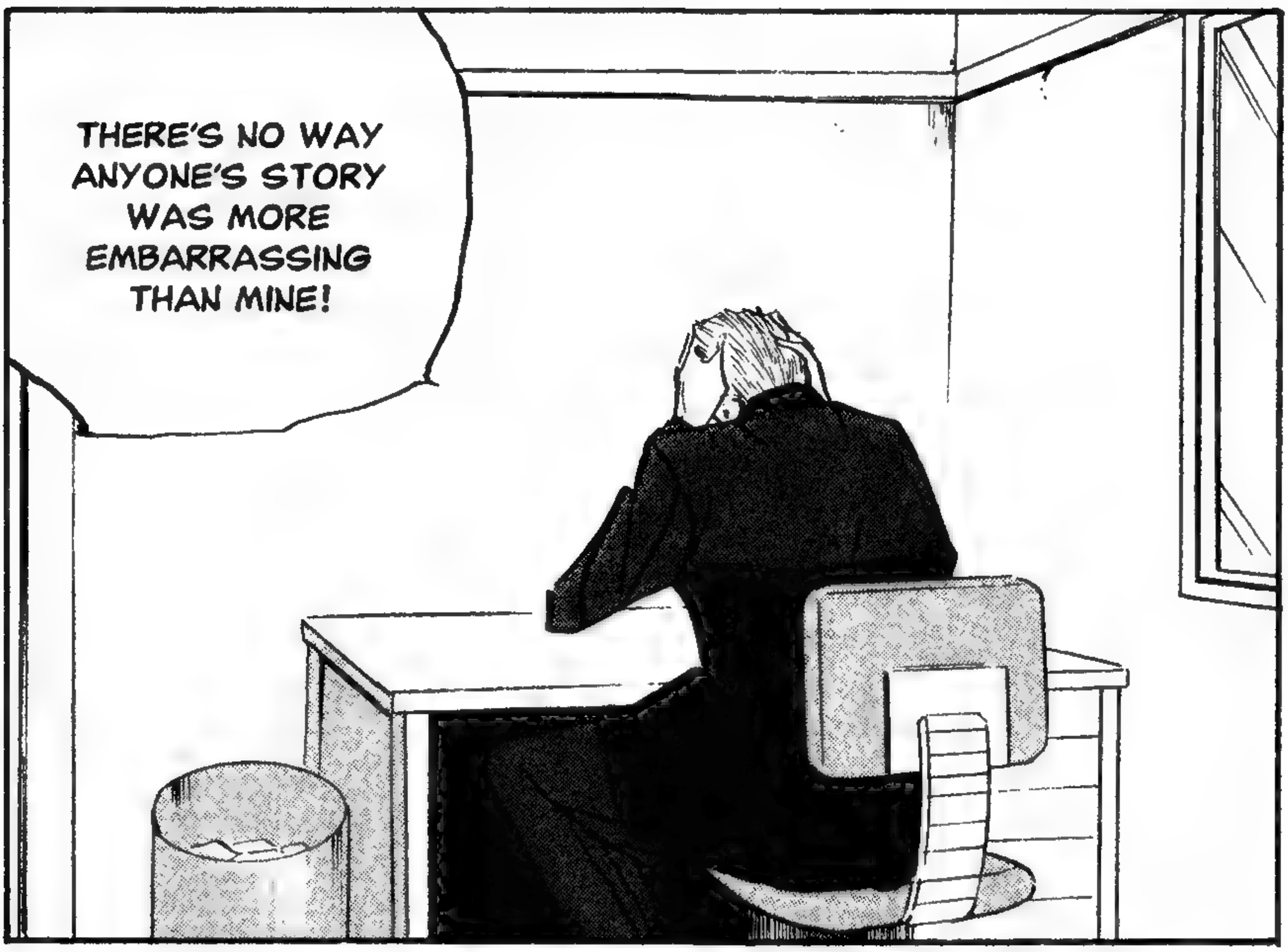
NOW YOU CAN GO OUT AND WALK WITH YOUR HEAD HELD HIGH!

YEAH, SO DON'T GO THINKING YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN EMBARRASSED. WE'VE ALL HAD SIMILAR EXPERIENCES.



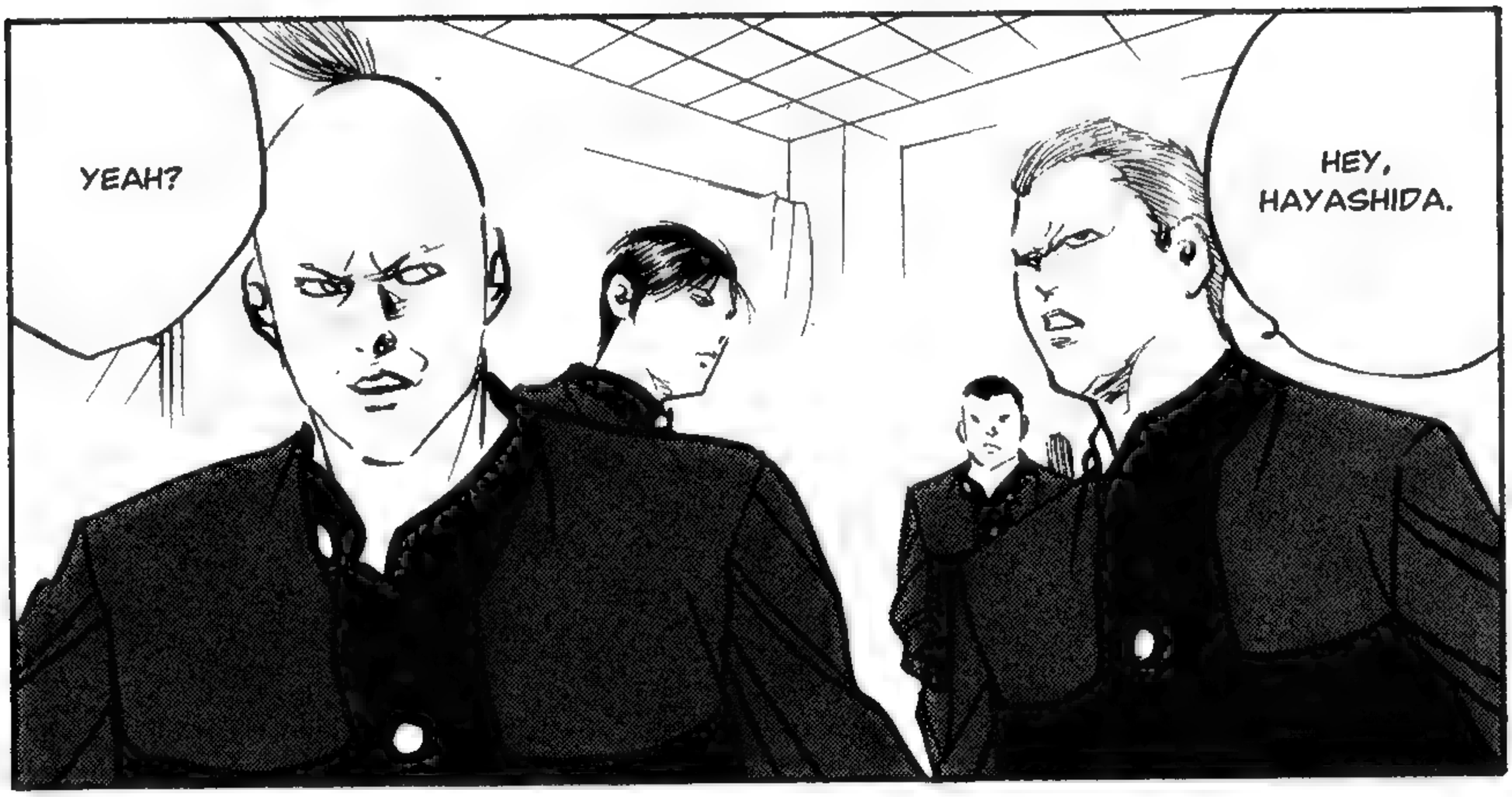


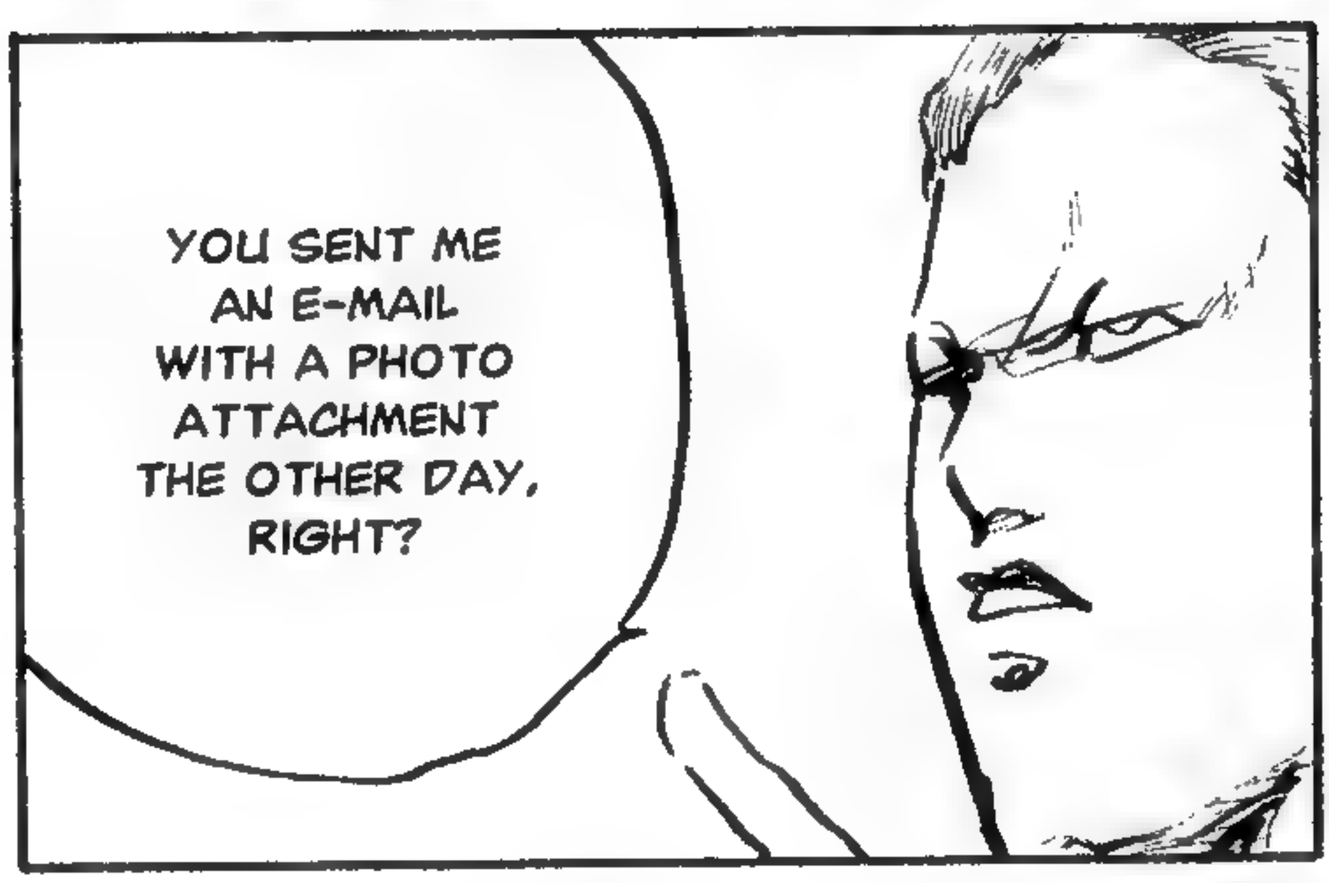



THERE'S NO WAY ANYONE'S STORY WAS MORE EMBARRASSING THAN MINE!

I AGREE.

# CHAPTER 240: **TELEPHONE**





WHAT IS **THIS** SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

THERE WASN'T EVEN ANY TEXT, JUST THIS PICTURE! WHAT THE HECK WERE YOU THINKING?

OH, THAT?!

HERE'S MY THING, HAYASHIDA...

YEAH, SOMETHING PROBABLY DID. I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS THOUGH.

YOU CERTAINLY SEEM HAPPY. DID SOMETHING **FAVORABLE** HAPPEN TO YOU?

HOLD ON A MINUTE!

NAH, YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO OUT OF YOUR WAY AND REPLY. I JUST SENT THAT BECAUSE I FELT LIKE IT.

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO SAY TO SOMETHING LIKE THIS?! I CAN'T EVEN REPLY TO IT, CAN I?

E-MAIL IS FUNDAMENTALLY ABOUT THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS!

YOU'RE BEING WAY TOO IRRESPONSIBLE!

HE'S RIGHT. YOUNG PEOPLE THESE DAYS SEND MAIL WITHOUT GIVING IT A SECOND THOUGHT.

YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT THIS WAY TOO MUCH. IF YOU KEEP OVER-ANALYZING YOUR E-MAIL, YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SEND ANY.

YOU CAN'T JUST ACT LIKE A KID AND GO AROUND SENDING CRYPTIC E-MAILS BECAUSE YOU "FEEL LIKE IT"! THAT PUTS WAY TOO MUCH STRESS ON YOUR RECIPIENTS! TRY PUTTING YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES!

YEAH. NOT BECAUSE IT HAD ANY REAL MEANING, BUT BECAUSE...YOU KNOW, IT WAS ONE DELICIOUS-LOOKING MUFFIN.

A MUFFIN?!

ACTUALLY, THE OTHER DAY A FRIEND OF MINE SENT ME A PICTURE OF A MUFFIN.

N-NO! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL. HE JUST WANTED TO SEND IT.

YOUR FRIEND WANTED TO BRAG ABOUT THE DELICIOUSNESS OF THIS MUFFIN TO OTHERS, IS THAT IT?

HE SENT A PICTURE OF IT JUST BECAUSE IT LOOKED DELICIOUS... THAT'S FRICKIN' AWESOME!

IN THIS WORLD OF OURS, SUCH THINGS ARE NORMAL.

HUH?!

I THINK THAT CLEARS THINGS UP. DON'T YOU, MAEDA?

UH, SURE.

I'M GONNA KEEP ON SENDING YOU E-MAILS OUT OF THE BLUE. YOU JUST TRY TO GET USED TO THEM, OK?

THERE'S NO NEED TO GO PUSHING YOURSELF TO CONFORM TO THE CURRENT TRENDS... BUT YOU SHOULD KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN AND AT LEAST **TRY** TO ADAPT.

OH...

. . . .

B-BEEP

SENDER: HAYASH

SHP

K-CHAK

CHK

CHK

MMH

NO, I'M NOT OUT OF TOILET PAPER.

TNK カチャ

THAT HAYASHIDA'S A GREAT GUY FOR WORRYING SO MUCH ABOUT ME...

AAH, GOOD. NOW THAT I'VE MADE SURE, I'LL REST EASIER KNOWING I CAN GO TO THE BATHROOM WHENEVER I LIKE.

HE'S JUST SENDING ME MEANINGLESS PHOTOS AT RANDOM!

P-THNK

THERE'S NO WAY THAT CAN BE RIGHT!

AGAIN?

BEEP

STILL, I CAN'T LET MYSELF GET ALL WORKED UP OVER SOMETHING LIKE THIS. C'MON, MAEDA. JUST IGNORE HIM.

THAT GUY DOESN'T EVEN KNOW THE MEANING OF THE WORD "MEANING"! LOOKING FOR MEANING IN ANYTHING HE DOES IS JUST MEANINGLESS!

I BET INSTEAD OF A ROLL OF TOILET PAPER, THIS TIME IT'LL BE **TWO** ROLLS OF TOILET PAPER. THAT'S ABOUT THE LEVEL OF INTELLIGENCE WE'RE DEALING WITH HERE.

IT'S JUST GOING TO BE ANOTHER STUPID PHOTO!

A ROLL OF TOILET PAPER AND A FLOSSER...

...

SENDER: HAYASHIDA

I HAVE TO IGNORE THIS!

NO, NO!

THIS IS REALLY GONNA BUG ME!

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!

AS TIME WENT ON, I FOUND MYSELF STARTING TO LOOK FORWARD TO HAYASHIDA'S E-MAILS.

AH, HERE WE GO!

B-BEEP

I NEVER WOULD'VE EXPECTED SOMETHING LIKE THIS FROM HAYASHIDA.

I GUESS HE'S MORE OF A SOFTIE THAN WE THOUGHT.

AH! HE SENT A PICTURE OF A CAT TODAY. THAT'S PRETTY CUTE!

IF HE EVER HAS KIDS, I BET HE'S GOING TO BE ONE DOTING PARENT. HEH HEH.

I SWEAR...

B-BEEEEP

B-BEEEEP

AH, HERE IT IS!

B-BEEP

BY THIS POINT, I LOOKED FORWARD TO HIS E-MAILS SO MUCH THAT I WOULD GROW CONCERNED IF THEY DIDN'T COME.

HE REALLY HAD ME WORRIED. THIS WAS THE THIRD DAY WITHOUT ANY MAIL!

I'VE COME TO SEE HIM IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT.

I HAD NO IDEA HE WAS INTO THAT SORT OF THING.

WHOA, A BOUQUET!

BUT MY SUSPICIONS WERE CORRECT...

WAIT, COULD THIS BE TO GIVE TO A GIRL? NAH, NO WAY.

HM?

HERE WE GO.

IS HE ON A DATE?

HUH?

WOW. THIS GUY'S GOT MORE TALENT THAN I GAVE HIM CREDIT FOR. WAY TO GO, HAYASHIDA!

YEAH, I'M SURE OF IT-- HAYASHIDA'S WITH A GIRL!

THAT LOOKS LIKE A GIRL'S PURSE.

HM?

BEEP

I GUESS HE'S PROBABLY SHY AND DOESN'T WANT TO SHOW HER.

I WONDER WHAT KIND OF GIRL SHE IS.

LOOK AT HOW HAPPY HE LOOKS. WAHAHA!

AAAH! HE'S HOLDING HER HAND!

B-BEEP

THREE DAYS LATER

I'VE NEVER RESPONDED TO ONE OF THESE YET. THIS'LL BE MY FIRST REPLY.

C'MON, SHOW ME HER FACE!

I'LL JUST FIRE OFF A QUICK RESPONSE...

IT WAS ALSO THE FIRST OF HAYASHIDA'S E-MAILS WITH ANY WRITING.

YES! FINALLY!

IN ANSWER TO YOUR REQUEST, I GIVE YOU HER FACE.

- HAYASHIDA

HERE IT IS!

WHAT KIND OF GIRL IS SHE?

BEEP

WELL, HERE WE GO.

I WAS HAPPY THAT WE'D STARTED OUR E-MAIL EXCHANGE.

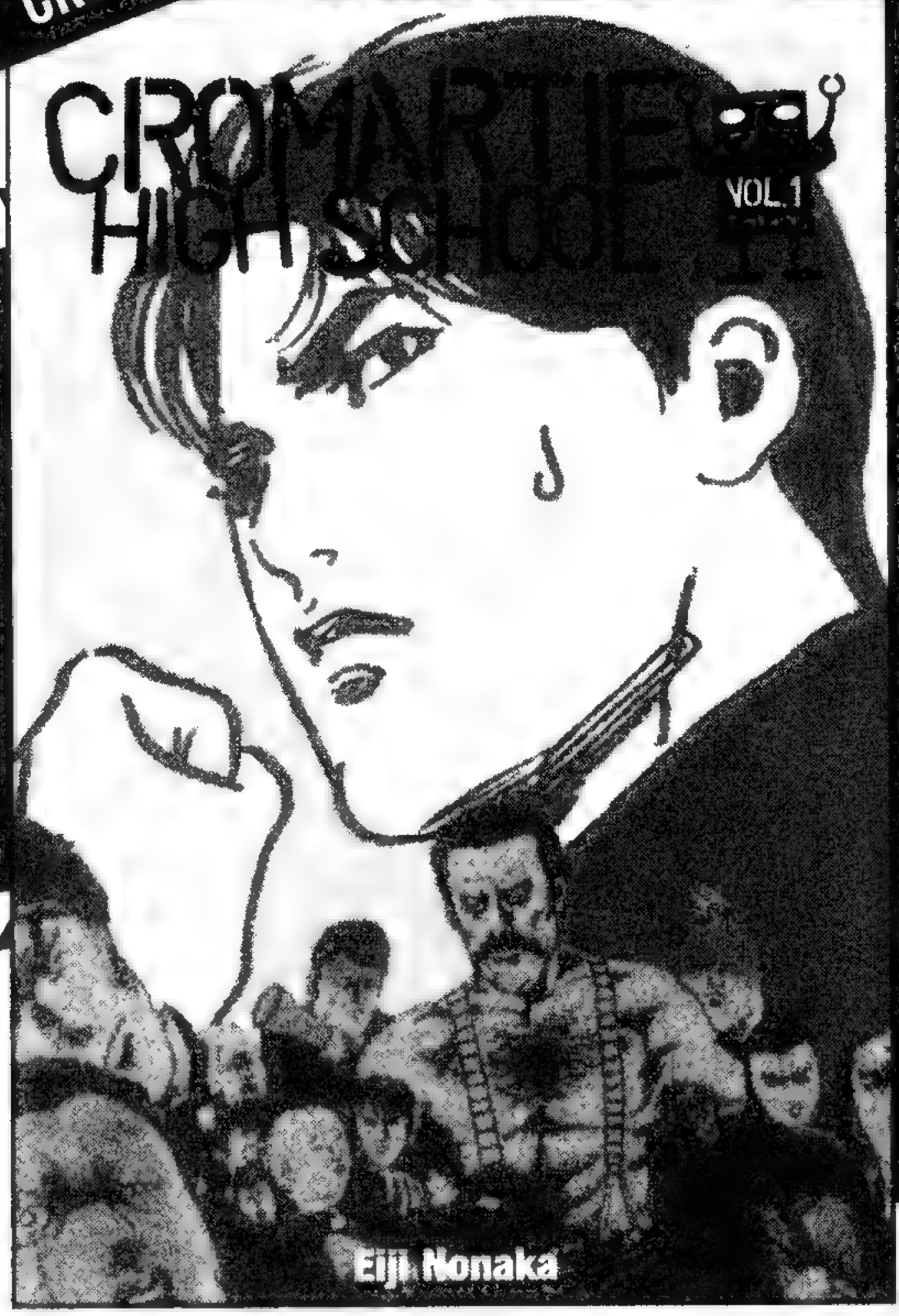
I FELT LIKE HAYASHIDA AND I HAD FINALLY BECOME ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER.

THEY SAY HE RAN AWAY FROM HOME.

Y'KNOW, I HAVEN'T SEEN MAEDA LATELY.

**HAYASHIDA, YOU'RE A DAREDEVIL.**

# CROMARTIE NEWS



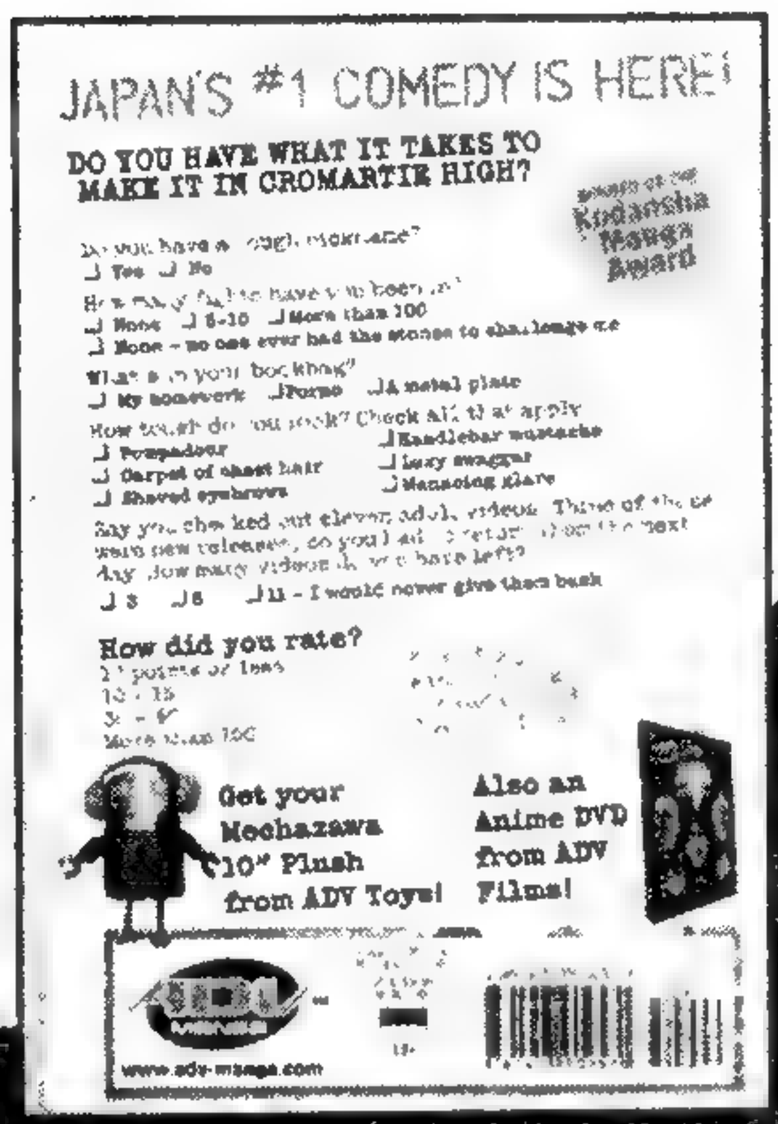

## FOR REAL?! *CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL*— FIRST JAPAN, NOW THE WORLD!

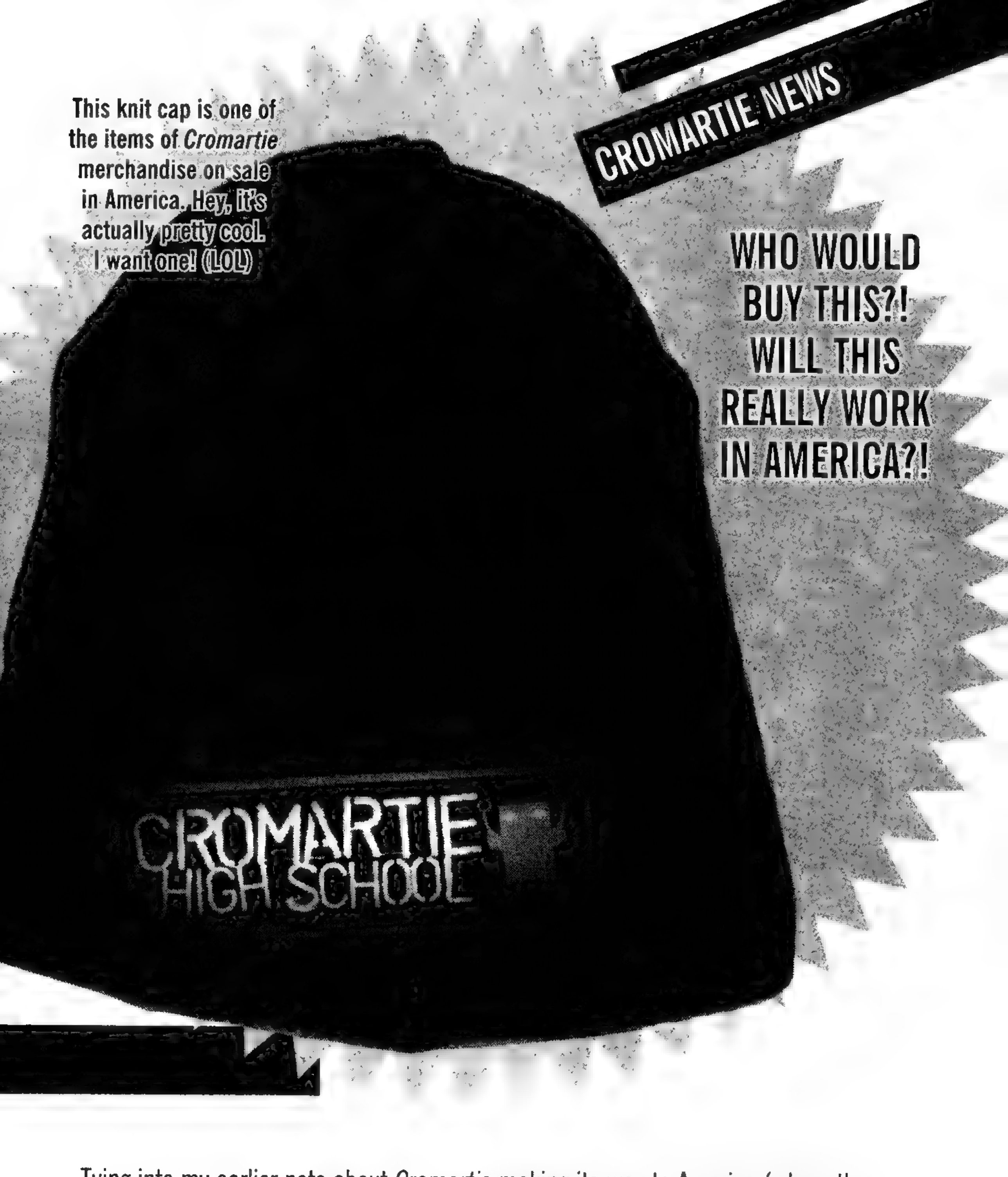
Not long ago, a shocking truth came to light. I think some of you already know that *Cromartie High School* was made into an anime. That alone was almost too shocking in its shockingness...but this ups the shock factor even more. Prepare yourselves—both the anime and (riding on its coattails) this very manga will be going on sale IN AMERICA!

**← The cover in question**

LOL, is this really OK? And I mean that in any number of ways... Seriously, I think even some native Japanese people don't get the humor of this manga--what will Americans think? "Hey, these students are wearing uniforms!" maybe. I get the feeling the whole point of the comic could easily get lost... Is this really OK?!

By the way, the back cover calls *Cromartie* "Japan's #1 comedy" and declares it the "winner of the Kodansha Manga Award." That's some nice ad copy, a blend of truth and fiction. But I doubt anyone is going to know what the Kodansha Manga Awards are.

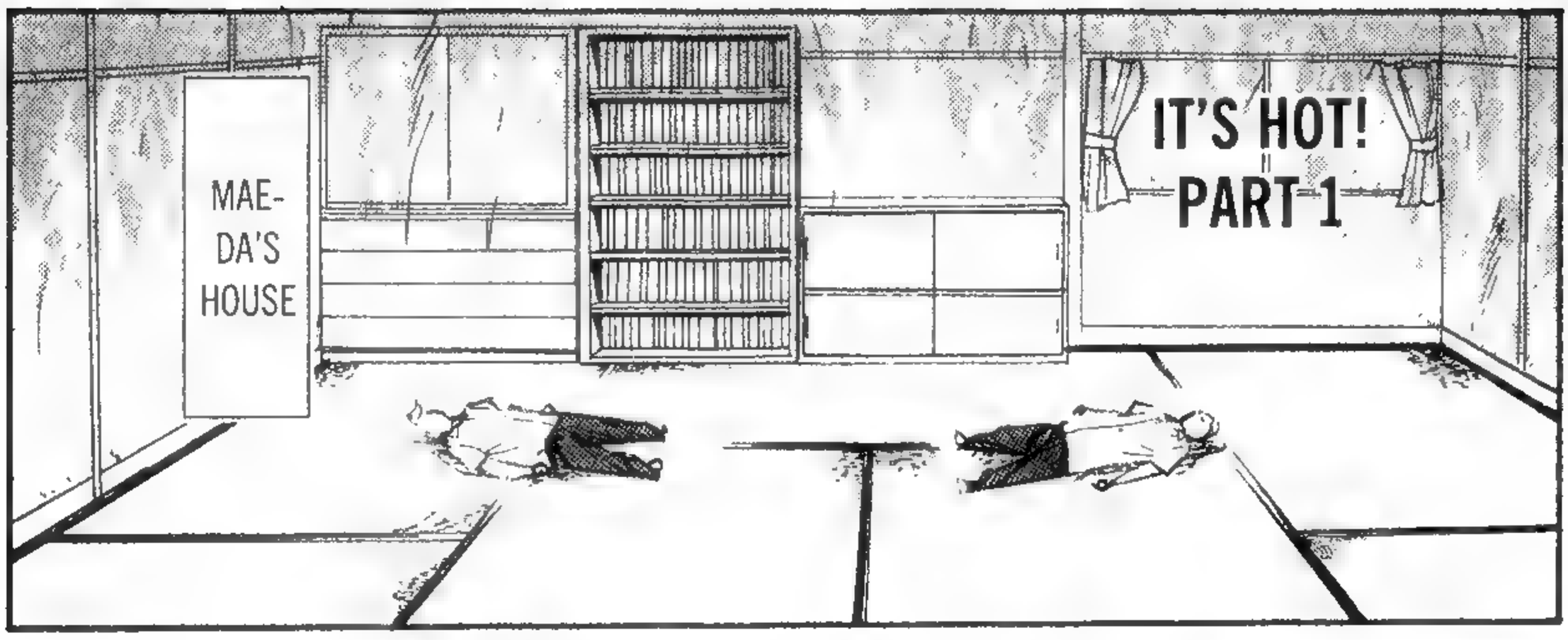

JAPAN'S #1 COMEDY IS HERE!
DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE IT IN CROMARTIE HIGH?
Kodansha Manga Award
Get your Mochazawa 10" Plush from ADV Toys!
Also an Anime DVD from ADV Films!
www.adv-manga.com

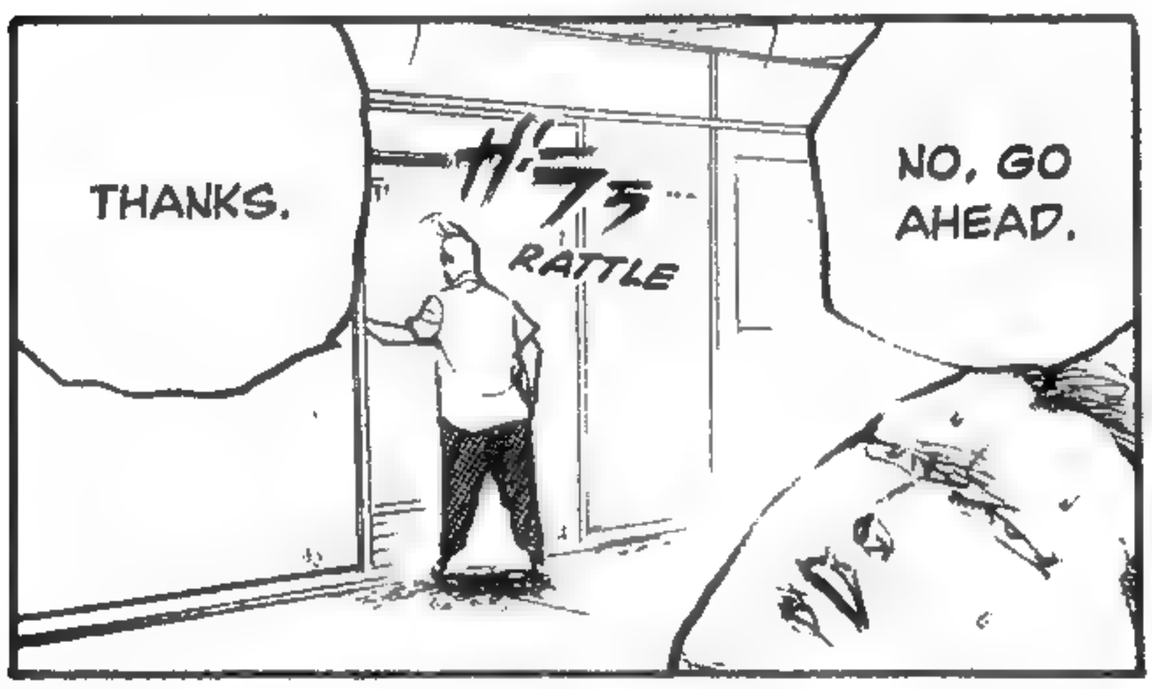

This knit cap is one of the items of *Cromartie* merchandise on sale in America. Hey, it's actually pretty cool. I want one! (LOL)
CROMARTIE NEWS
WHO WOULD BUY THIS?! WILL THIS REALLY WORK IN AMERICA?!
CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL

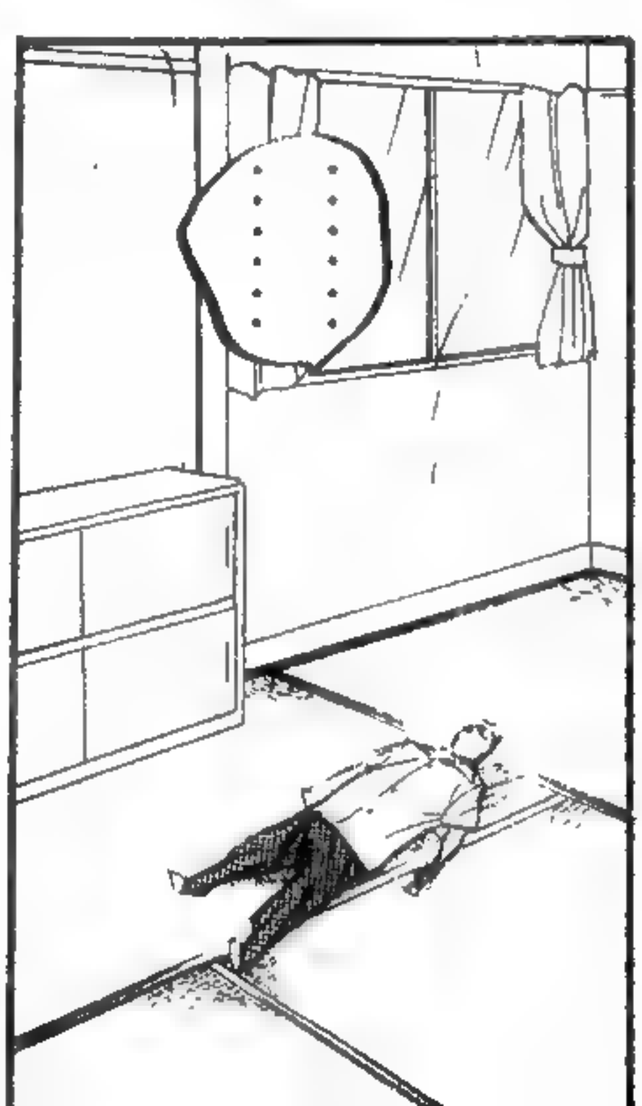
Tying into my earlier note about *Cromartie* making its way to America (where the anime apparently aired on TV—that's pretty incredible in and of itself), the decision has been made to also produce *Cromartie* merchandise! Will this really fly in America?!

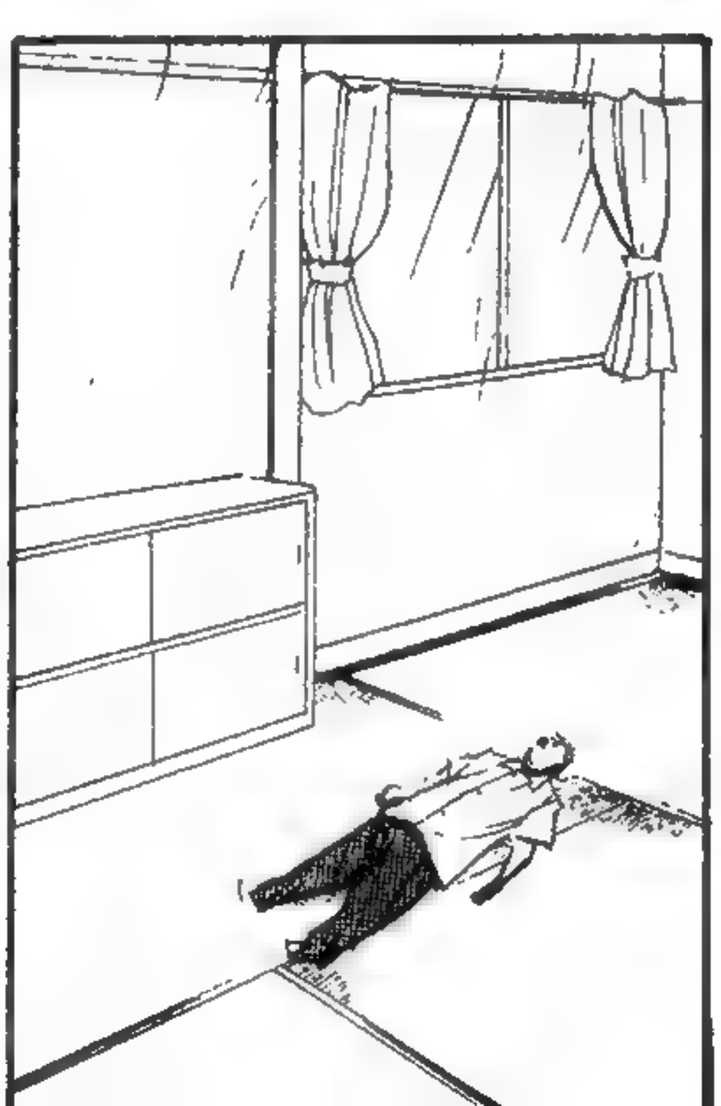
Considering what I've heard about the state of world affairs, I've come to suspect that this sort of thing *won't* work in America...and I bet I'm right. Of course it won't work in America—this stuff doesn't even sell in Japan! (LOL) So yeah, I'm worried… but whatever. I'll just wait for some Hollywood star to admit to being a *Cromartie* fan.

# CHAPTER 241: **IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY**







WELL, IT'S SUMMER.

IT WAS PRAC-TICALLY BOILING!

TALK ABOUT A SHOCK... THAT SHOWER JUST NOW WAS REALLY HOT.

HOT SUMMERS AND HOT SHOWERS? I CAN'T SEE HOW THAT MAKES PEOPLE VERY HAPPY.

WHAT DID I JUST SAY? IT'S SUMMER.

BUT I TURNED THE KNOB TO WHERE IT SHOULD'VE BEEN BARELY WARM. IT WAS **BOILING**, MAN!

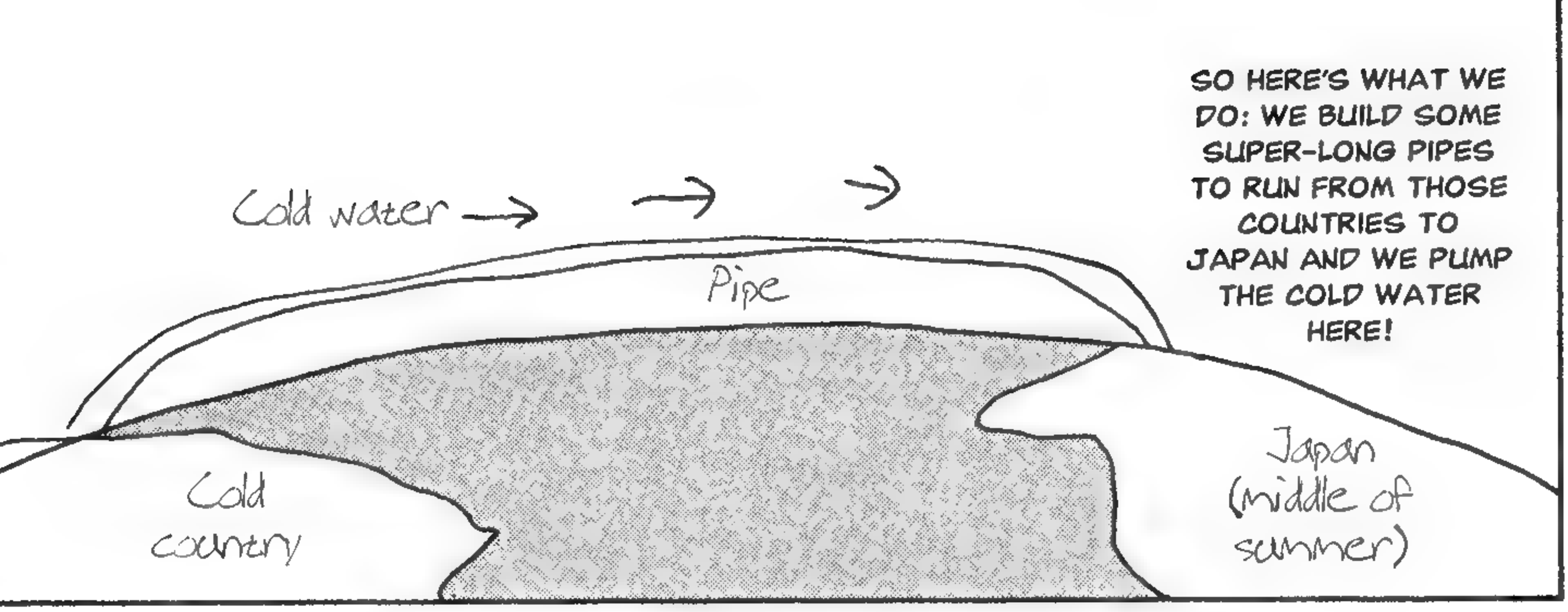
BUT HERE'S THE THING: I'VE COME UP WITH A GREAT IDEA!

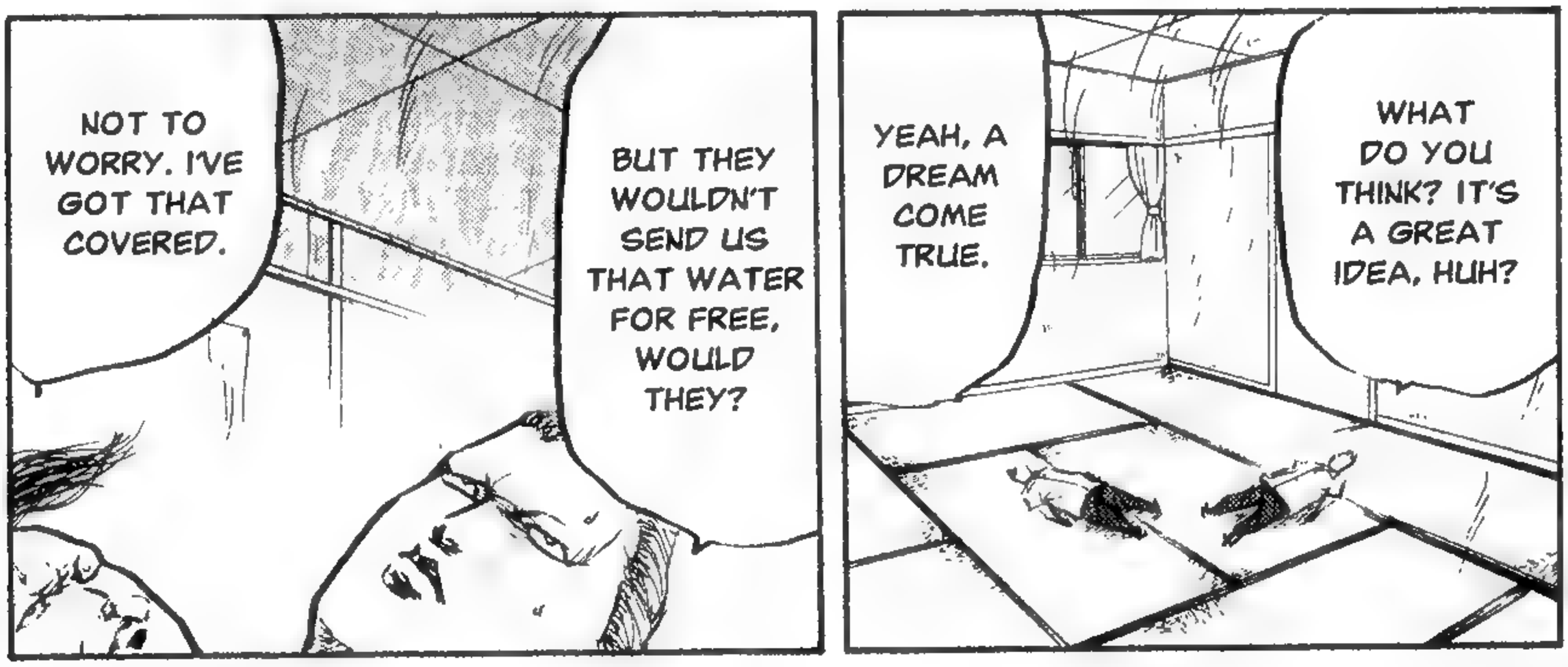
LIKE THAT WOULD HAPPEN.

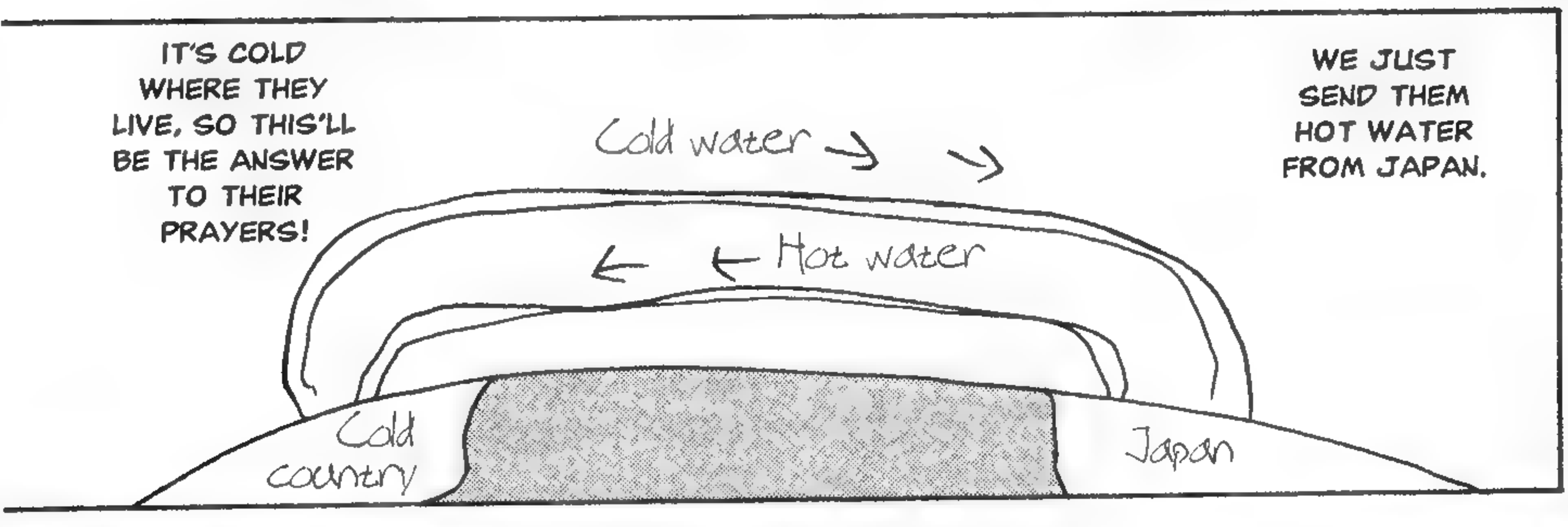
I WISH WE COULD GET THAT HOT WATER TO COME OUT IN WINTER INSTEAD.

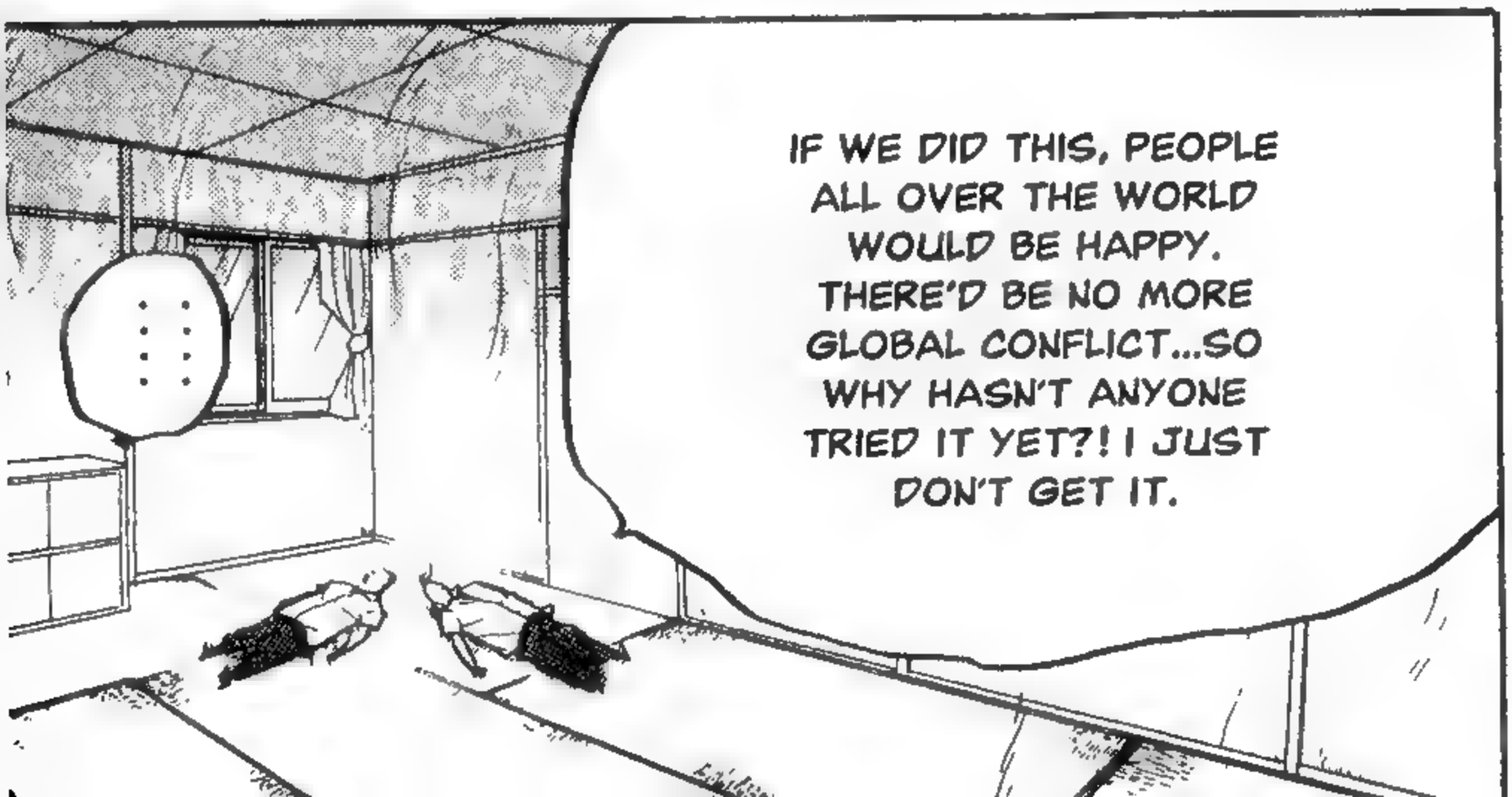
BUT I BET THERE ARE COUNTRIES OUT THERE WHERE IT'S STILL COLD.

RIGHT NOW, JAPAN IS IN WHAT YOU COULD CALL SUMMER HELL...


SO HERE'S WHAT WE DO: WE BUILD SOME SUPER-LONG PIPES TO RUN FROM THOSE COUNTRIES TO JAPAN AND WE PUMP THE COLD WATER HERE!
Cold water
Pipe
Cold country
Japan (middle of summer)


NOT TO WORRY. I'VE GOT THAT COVERED.
BUT THEY WOULDN'T SEND US THAT WATER FOR FREE, WOULD THEY?
YEAH, A DREAM COME TRUE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK? IT'S A GREAT IDEA, HUH?


IT'S COLD WHERE THEY LIVE, SO THIS'LL BE THE ANSWER TO THEIR PRAYERS!
WE JUST SEND THEM HOT WATER FROM JAPAN.
Cold water
Hot water
Cold country
Japan


IF WE DID THIS, PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD WOULD BE HAPPY. THERE'D BE NO MORE GLOBAL CONFLICT...SO WHY HASN'T ANYONE TRIED IT YET?! I JUST DON'T GET IT.

IT'S LIKE, YOU KNOW, GIVE AND TAKE.

IT HAS TO DO WITH SENDING HOT WATER FROM JAPAN.

HUH?! A PRETTY BIG FLAW?

THIS PLAN OF YOURS SEEMS PERFECT, BUT I SEE A PRETTY BIG FLAW WITH IT.

IT WOULD GET COLD ALONG THE WAY.

I'M PRETTY SURE...

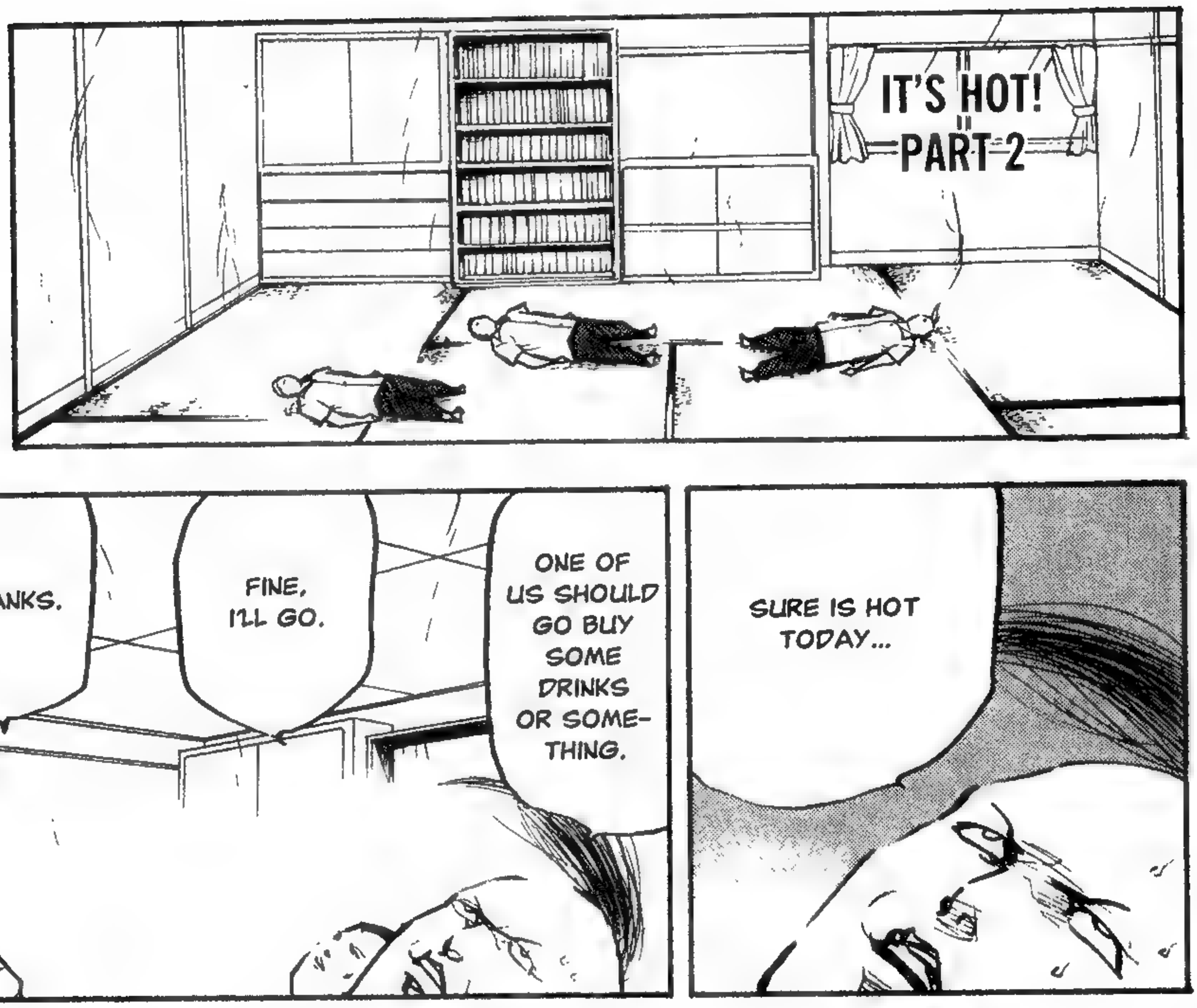
. . . . . .

. . . . . .

DAMN. IT'S SO HOT, I GUESS I HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT.

IT REALLY IS HOT.

# CHAPTER 242: **HEAT WAVE**



SORRY. I DON'T WANT TO SOUND LIKE I'M MAKING EXCUSES OR ANYTHING, BUT...

Y'KNOW, THIS COULD ALMOST BE CONSIDERED ABUSE.

I DON'T FRICKIN' BELIEVE IT!

I ACCIDENTALLY BOUGHT **HOT** COFFEE.

COFFEE

COFFEE

YOU HAVE A POINT...

WHEN IT'S SUMMER, THEY SHOULD JUST TAKE THEM OFF THE SHELVES.

I DON'T THINK IT'S RIGHT TO HAVE HOT DRINKS FOR SALE IN THE MIDDLE OF SUMMER.

BUT THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO LIKE THEIR BEVERAGES HOT, EVEN IN SUMMER.

YES, THERE ARE!

HUH?! ARE THERE REALLY PEOPLE LIKE THAT?

YOU HAVE TO THINK OF THEM, TOO.

GOOD.

EVERY-THING'S READY, BOSS.

12TH ENDURANCE CHALLENGE

OF COURSE. I'LL GO GET THEM RIGHT AWAY.

ALL WE NEED NOW ARE THE HOT DRINKS. WITHOUT THOSE, WE CAN'T GET THINGS STARTED.

PORTABLE STOVES, THICK JACKETS... IT'S PERFECT.

HOT NOODLE STEW...

WHAT?!

IT LOOKS LIKE AS OF THIS YEAR, THEY'VE STOPPED SELLING HOT DRINKS IN SUMMER!

WHAT IS IT?

BOSS! TERRIBLE NEWS!

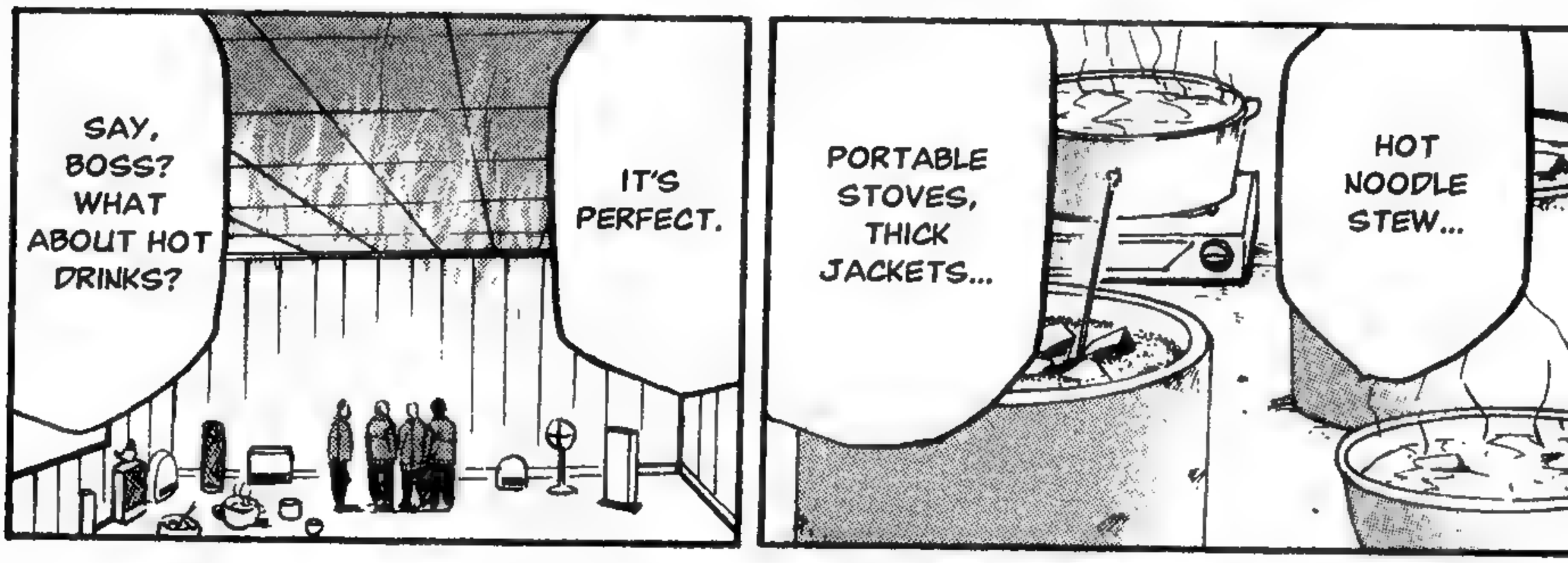
HOLD ON A MINUTE! YOU'RE SAYING WE SHOULD KEEP SELLING HOT DRINKS IN SUMMER FOR PEOPLE LIKE **THEM**?!

YEAH, SO FOR THEM.

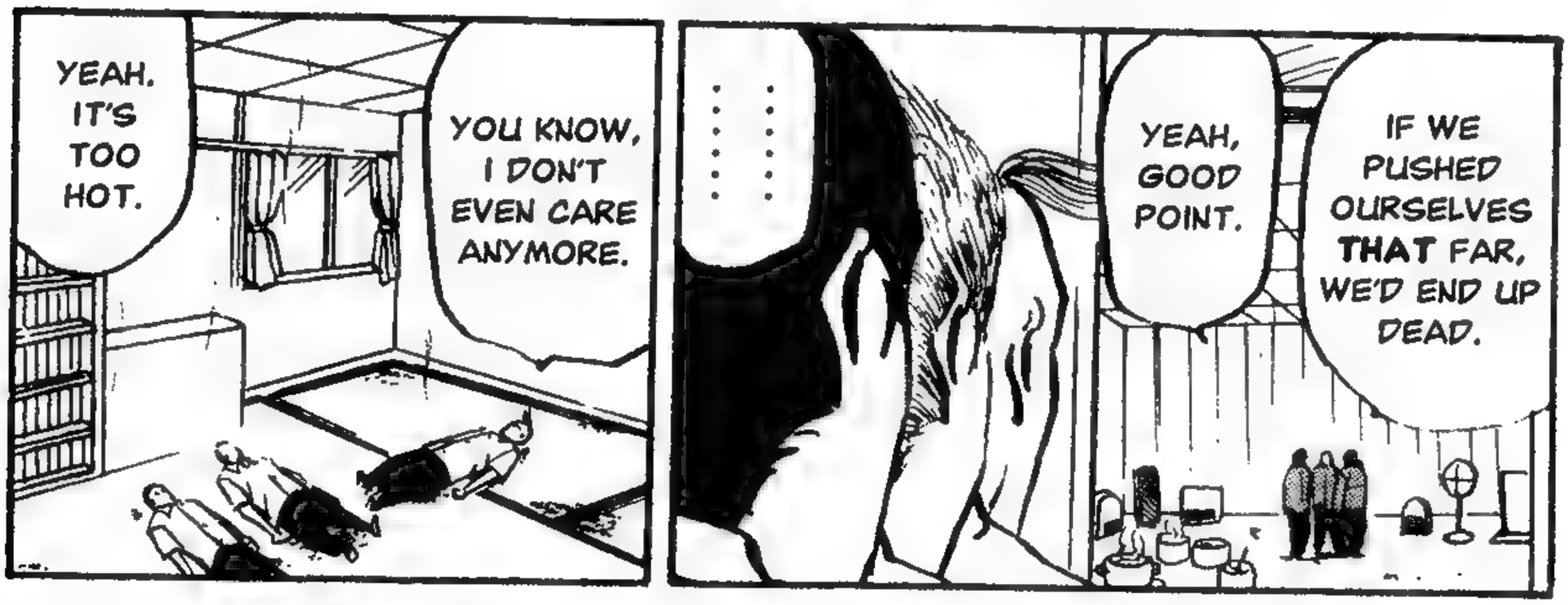
BUT WE'VE DONE THIS ENDURANCE CHALLENGE 11 TIMES ALREADY! WHAT ABOUT OUR LONG AND PROUD TRADITION?!

THEN THIS HAS ALL BEEN FOR NOTHING!

12TH ENDURANCE CHALLENGE
LET'S GO SEE.
WAIT, DO PEOPLE LIKE THAT EVEN EXIST?

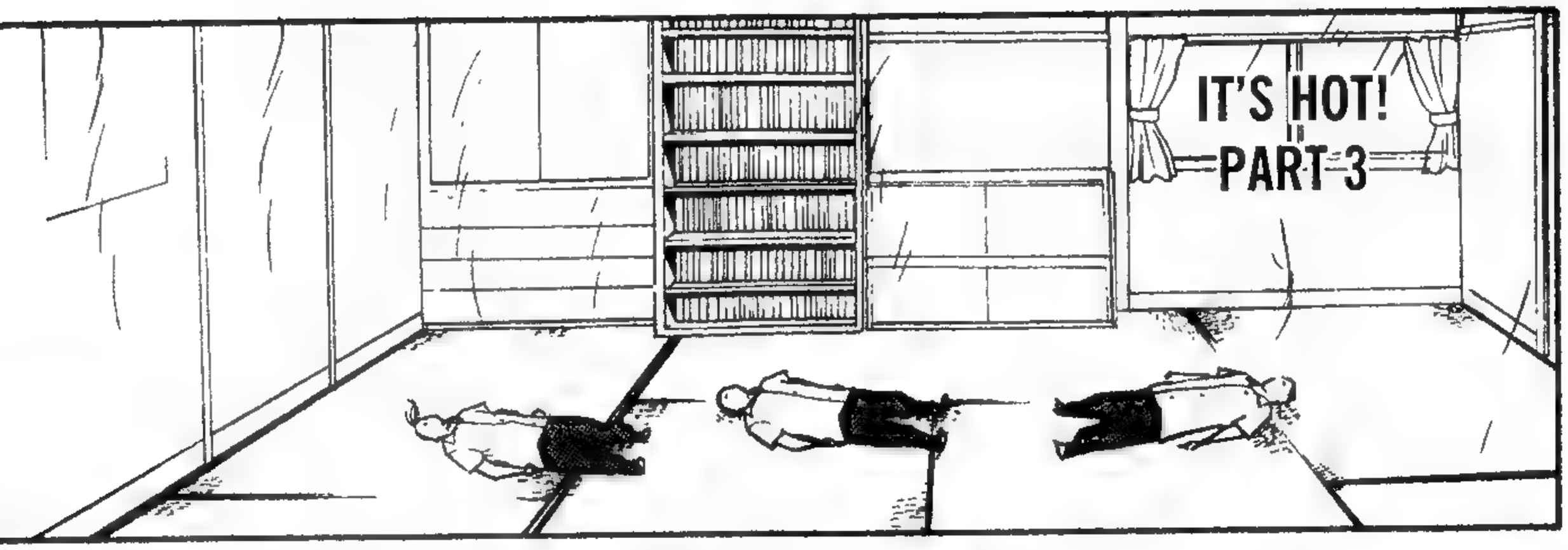

SAY, BOSS? WHAT ABOUT HOT DRINKS?
IT'S PERFECT.
PORTABLE STOVES, THICK JACKETS...
HOT NOODLE STEW...

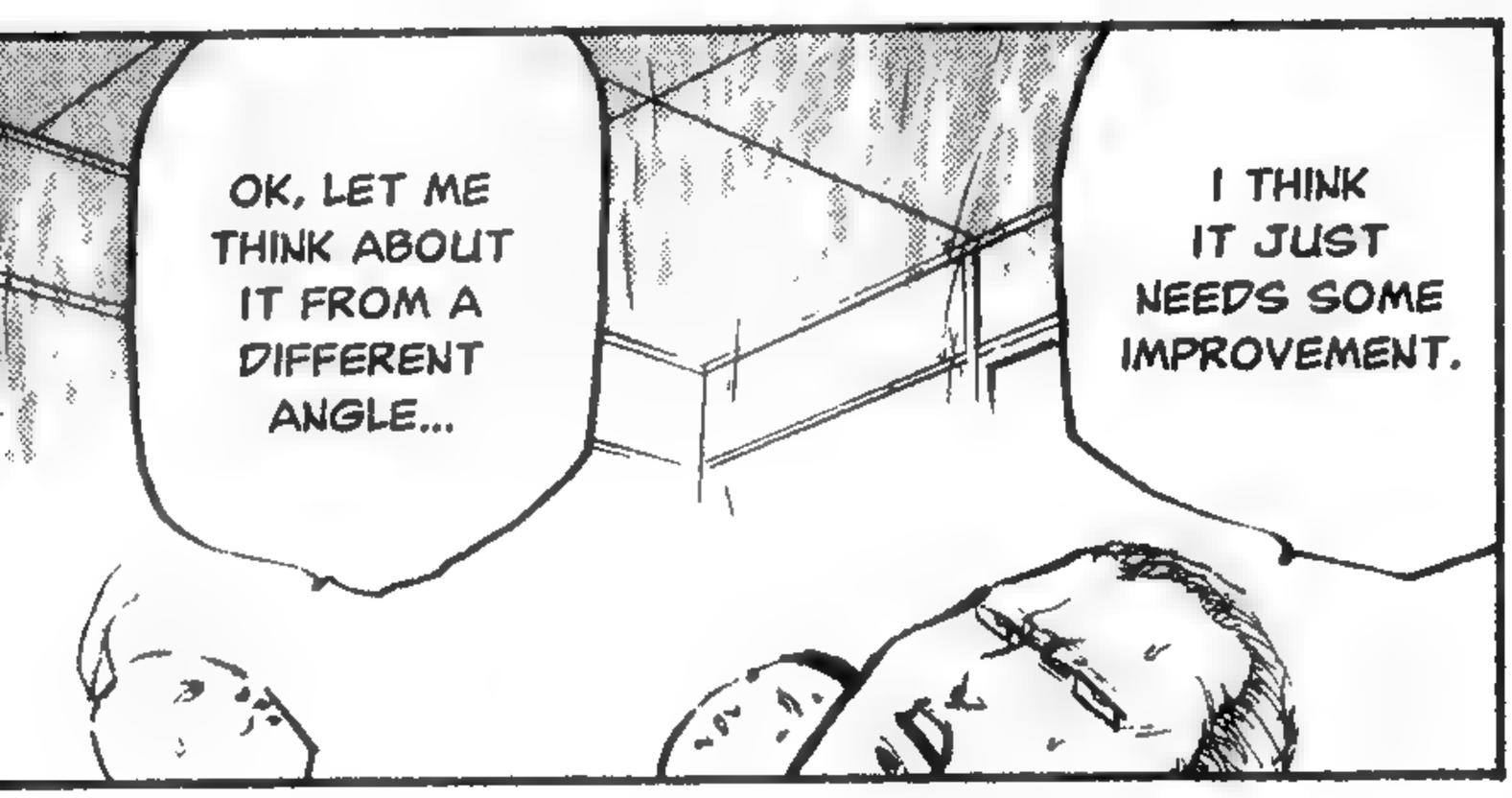
HOT DRINKS?

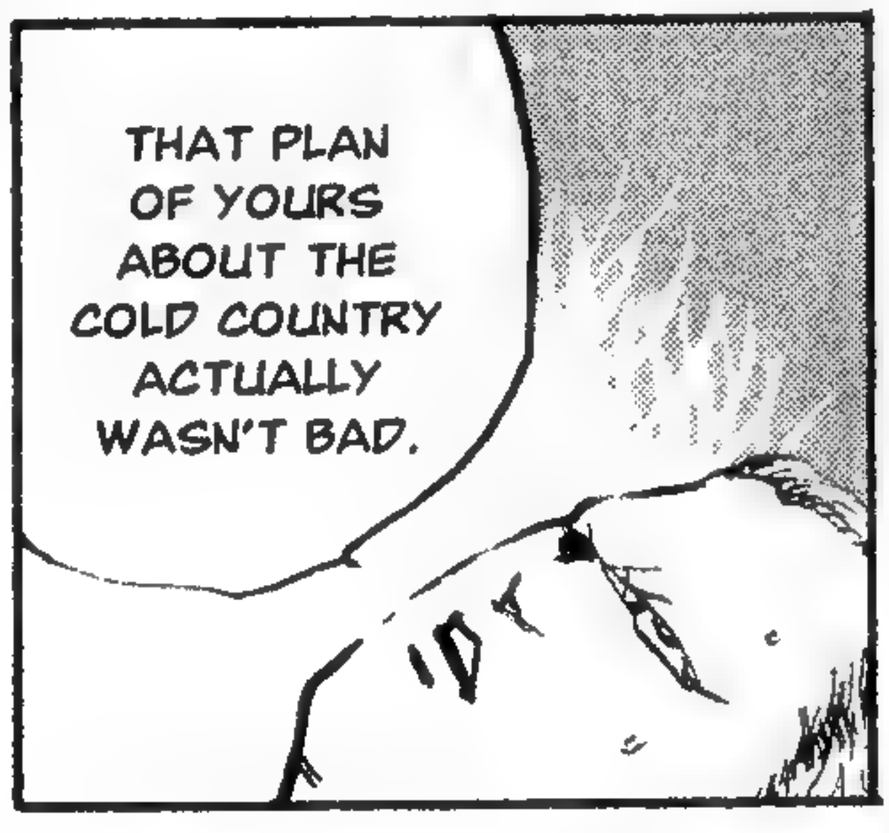

YEAH. IT'S TOO HOT.
YOU KNOW, I DON'T EVEN CARE ANYMORE.
YEAH, GOOD POINT.
IF WE PUSHED OURSELVES **THAT** FAR, WE'D END UP DEAD.

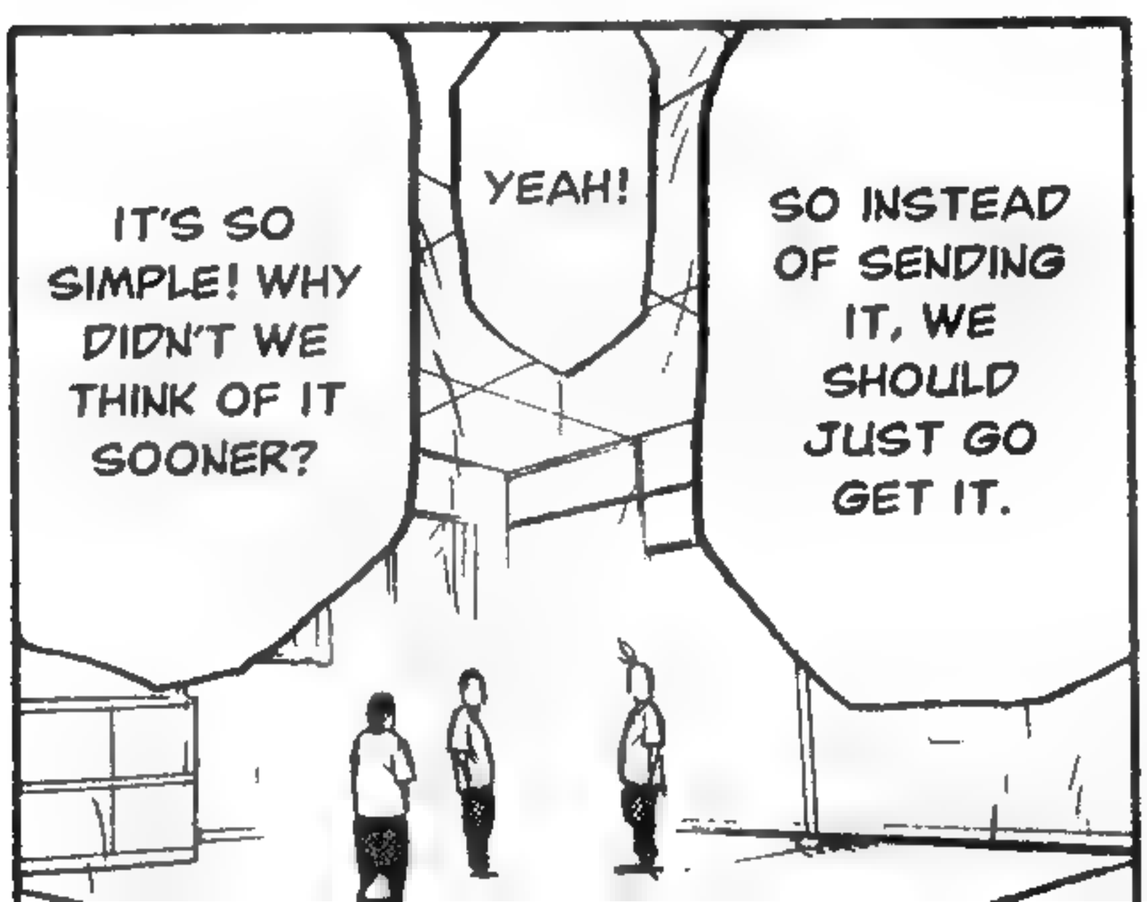
**HE WAS CLOSE.**

# CHAPTER 243: **COOL UNDER HEAT**





11°

BWSSSH

. . .

. . .

K-TNK

K-TNK

B-BEEP

YEAH.

DON'T GIVE UP. WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

PROBABLY BECAUSE THE AIR PRESSURE'S SO LOW.

IT'S GETTING A LITTLE HARD TO BREATHE.

YES! COLD COUN-TRY!

WE'RE FINALLY HERE!

COLD COUNTRY

GOOD IDEA.

ANYWAY, WE'RE ALL TIRED, SO WE SHOULD REST FOR A BIT.

I JUST DIDN'T THINK IT'D BE SO COLD!

I WISH I'D BROUGHT A JACKET.

IT SURE IS COLD... IT'S GETTING PRETTY UNCOM-FORTABLE.

THANKS.

I'LL GO GET US SOMETHING HOT TO DRINK.

HEY, LOOK! THERE'S A VENDING MACHINE.

I ACCI-DENTALLY GOT **COLD** DRINKS.

WHAT IS IT?

SORRY, GUYS.

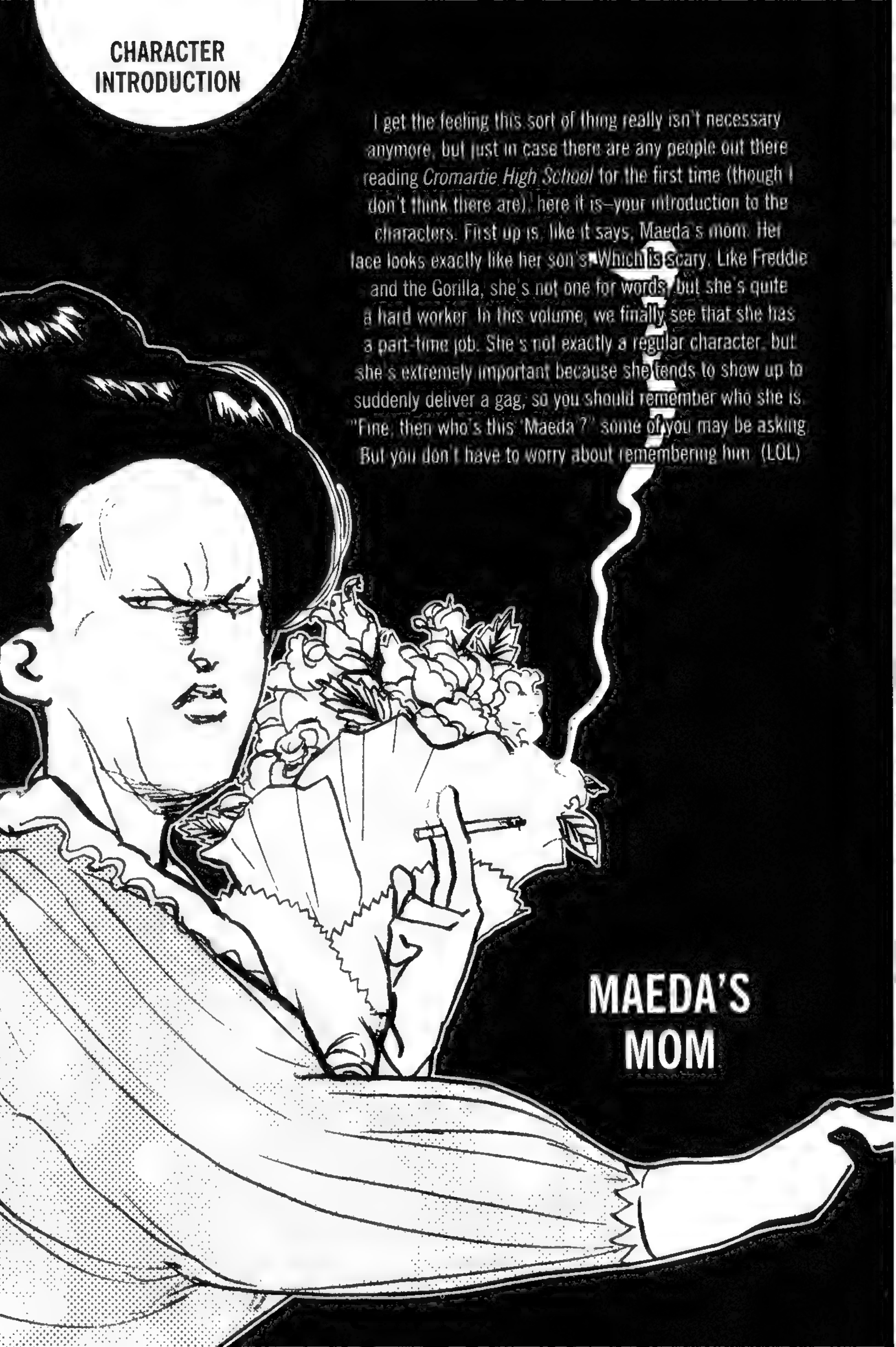
SURE WOULD.

YEAH, THAT WOULD BE PRETTY TERRIBLE.

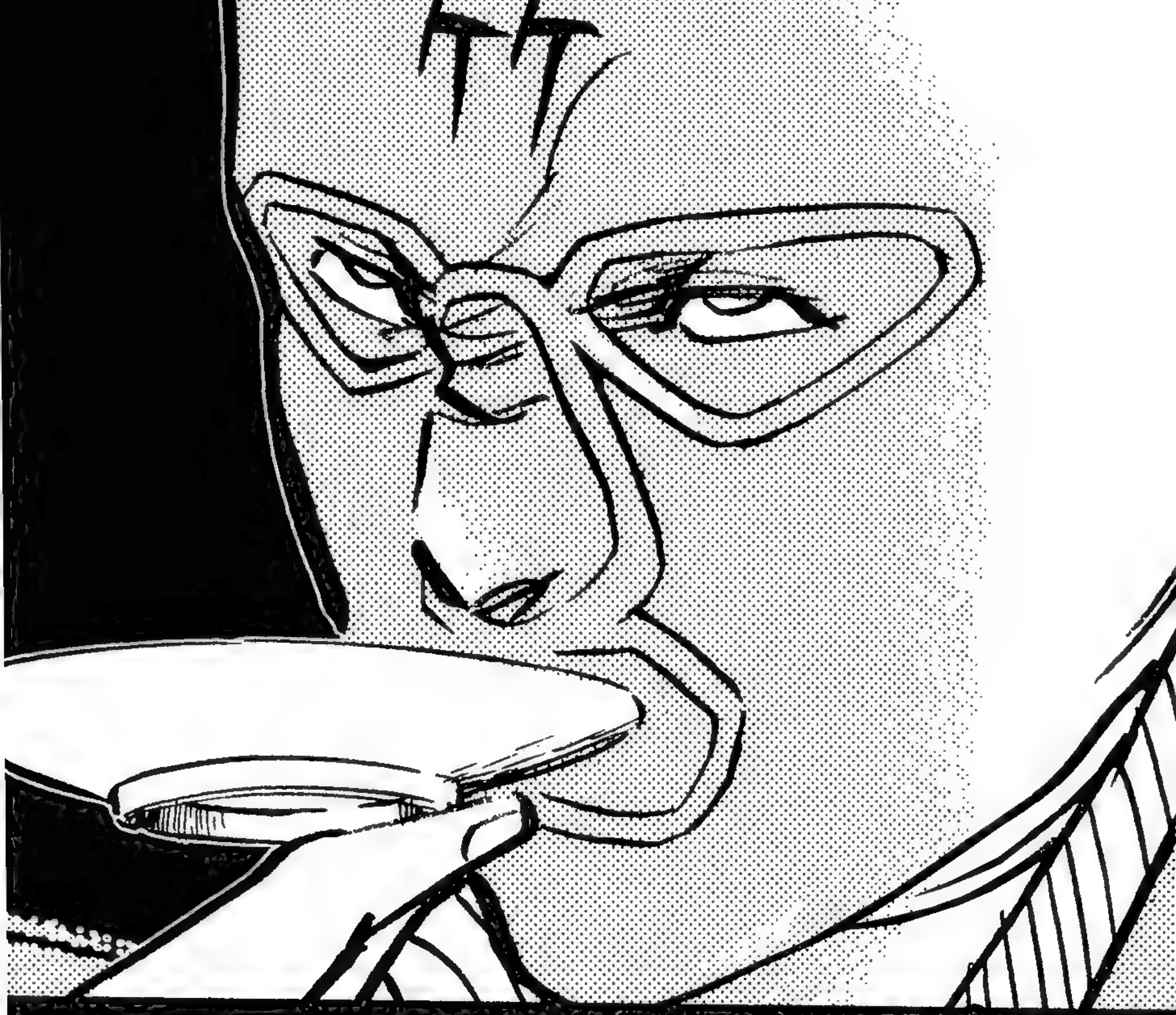
**I DON'T THINK THERE'S SUCH A PLACE AS "COLD COUNTRY."**

# CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

I get the feeling this sort of thing really isn't necessary anymore, but just in case there are any people out there reading *Cromartie High School* for the first time (though I don't think there are), here it is—your introduction to the characters. First up is, like it says, Maeda's mom. Her face looks exactly like her son's. Which is scary. Like Freddie and the Gorilla, she's not one for words, but she's quite a hard worker. In this volume, we finally see that she has a part-time job. She's not exactly a regular character, but she's extremely important because she tends to show up to suddenly deliver a gag, so you should remember who she is. "Fine, then who's this 'Maeda'?" some of you may be asking. But you don't have to worry about remembering him. (LOL)



## MAEDA'S MOM

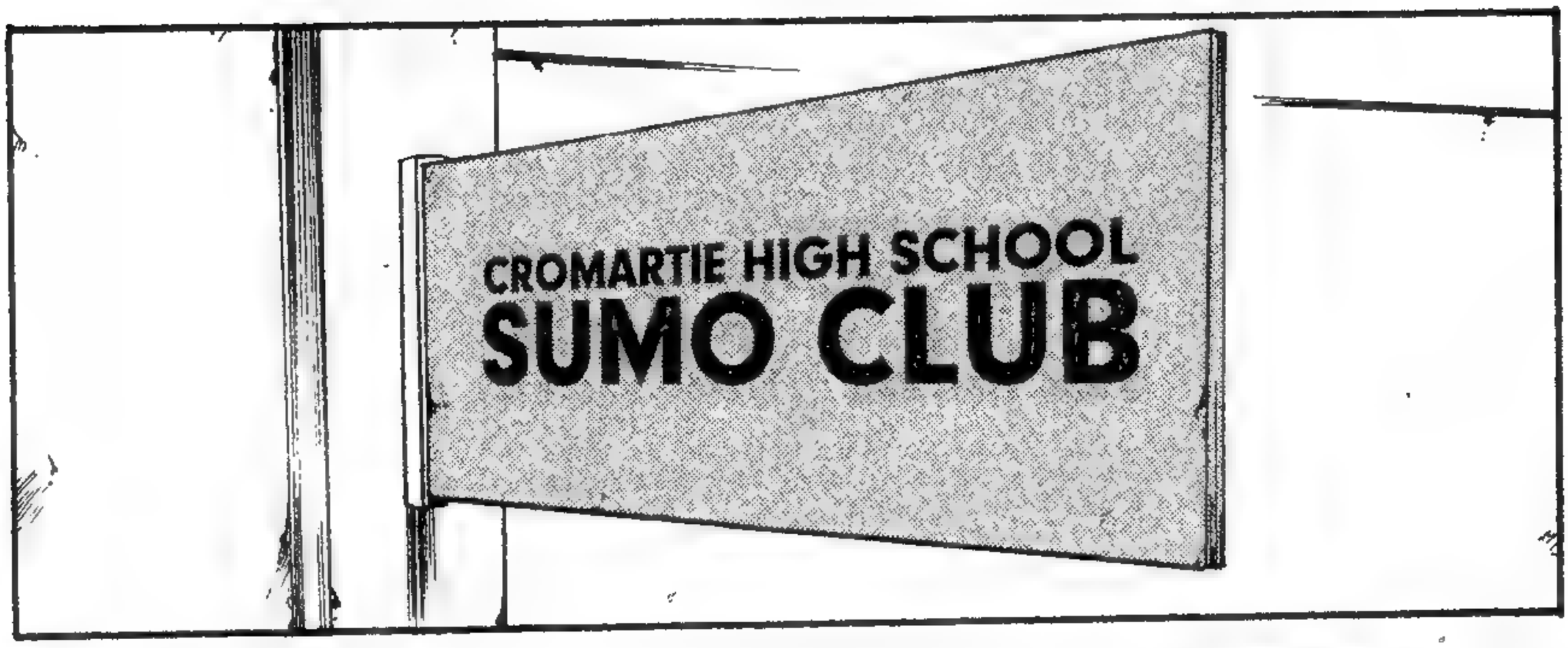


# MASKED TAKENOUCHI

I'm introducing this character here so any first-time *Cromartie* readers won't get all surprised and start exclaiming, "That student wears a mask!" This individual was originally a hijacker, but following a failed attempt to hijack a plane carrying the students of Cromartie High, he attempted to pass himself off as Takenouchi (the unofficial boss of Cromartie High) by writing part of Takenouchi's name on his mask. This, naturally, was enough for the students of Cromartie to scarcely give it a second thought. Also, no one teases him about the mask (though there is the occasional reference, which is always good for a laugh). Incidentally, I forgot most of this backstory myself, so writing it again here was a good thing.

CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

# CHAPTER 244: **SALT OF THE EARTH**



YES, SIR!

I WANT YOU TO COME AT ME AS HARD AS YOU CAN.

LET'S START WITH CHARGE-AND-DEFLECT DRILLS.

BWACK

DOSUKOI!*

*AN INTIMIDATING YELL ASSOCIATED WITH SUMO WRESTLERS.

THOMP

AAGH!

NOT GOOD ENOUGH!

BWACK

DOSUKOI!

STILL NOT GOOD ENOUGH!

THOMP

AAGH!

= HUFF =
= HUFF =

'SIR.

TAKE FIVE.

WELL

WHY AM I SO TIRED?

I DON'T MEAN TO SOUND LIKE I'M COMPLAINING, BUT I'M PRETTY WORN OUT.

OH. YEAH.

PROBABLY BECAUSE WE'RE THE ONLY TWO MEMBERS.

I'VE TRIED, BUT THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ANY TAKERS.

WE SHOULD TRY TO GET SOME MORE MEMBERS.

RIGHT? IF WE HAD A BUNCH OF OTHER GUYS, WE COULD TAKE TIME OUT TO REST. BUT WITH ONLY TWO MEMBERS, WE CAN'T.

WITH JUST THE TWO OF US, THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME FOR RESTING.

TRUE.

YEAH. IT DOESN'T HAVE THE KIND OF PRESENCE IT ONCE DID.

SUMO JUST ISN'T POPULAR THESE DAYS.

IDIOT! THEY'VE GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!

SUMO WAS POPULAR WHEN THEY WERE STILL AROUND.

I THINK WAKANOHANA AND TAKANOHANA* RETIRING REALLY HURT THE SUMO WORLD.

* SIBLING SUMO WRESTLERS FAMOUS FOR THEIR TECHNIQUE AND RAPID RISE THROUGH THE RANKS

WELL, WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT... YEAH, I GUESS IN THAT SENSE NOTHING HAS CHANGED.

SUMO IS STILL A BUNCH OF FAT GUYS PUSHING EACH OTHER AROUND IN THE DIRT!

IT'S NOT LIKE ANYTHING HAS CHANGED SINCE THEN!

IT WAS THE MEDIA. THEY KNEW HOW TO PLAY OUT THE DRAMA, AND THE PUBLIC BOUGHT RIGHT INTO IT.

THEN WHY WAS IT SO POPULAR BACK THEN?

TRUE.

STILL, THE FACT THAT SUMO DOESN'T CHANGE IS PART OF ITS APPEAL.

OK.

LET'S IMAGINE THERE'S A SUMO BOOM GOING ON RIGHT NOW.

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I SHOULD POINT OUT...

GOOD POINT. THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WATCHING SOMETHING AND ACTUALLY **DOING** SOMETHING... ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO SUMO.

THAT STILL DOESN'T MEAN THERE'D BE AN INCREASE IN PEOPLE WHO WANT TO START TRAINING.

DENKI

BUT EVEN IF SUMO IS SUPER POPULAR, AND YOU'VE GOT PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, MEN AND WOMEN, STANDING AROUND WATCHING LIVE FEEDS OF SUMO MATCHES...

PLUS, THERE'S THE FACT THAT YOU'VE GOTTA BE FAT.

HM.

FIRST, YOU'VE GOTTA STRIP DOWN TO JUST A LOINCLOTH. THAT ALONE IS ENOUGH TO PUT MOST PEOPLE OFF.

HUH?

BUT LET'S SAY YOU **DIDN'T** HAVE TO BE FAT.

YEAH. IT'S A PROBLEM...

THAT'S A PRETTY BIG HURDLE.

I GET IT. SO IT'S OK TO BE SKINNY THEN, HUH?

IF YOU GO AROUND SAYING PEOPLE CAN'T JOIN UNLESS THEY'RE FAT, YOU'LL NEVER GET YOUR CLUB GOING!

WITH SO MANY PEOPLE DIETING OR WHATEVER THESE DAYS, THERE AREN'T THAT MANY FAT PEOPLE AROUND.

OF COURSE IT'S IN YOUR FAVOR! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, IDIOT?!

IT'S IN YOUR FAVOR TO BE FAT, RIGHT?

STILL...

YOU'RE RIGHT, OF COURSE. IT'D BE A CATASTROPHE. SUMO WAS THE WHOLE REASON WE MADE OURSELVES GET FAT-- IF BEING FAT SUDDENLY COUNTED AGAINST US... WELL, TEARS WOULDN'T EVEN COME CLOSE.

IF IT WASN'T IN YOUR FAVOR TO BE FAT, EVERYTHING THE SUMO WORLD HAS DONE WOULD BE TURNED UPSIDE-DOWN!

YOU HAVE TO BE SOMEONE WHO CAN STRAP ONE OF THESE THINGS ON...A GUY WHO'S GOT HIS ACT TOGETHER AND WON'T START GETTING ALL EMBARRASSED. OTHERWISE, IT'S NO USE.

I'M TELLING YOU, WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IS BEIN' ABLE TO TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES AND PUT ON ONE OF THESE *MAWASHI*. THAT'S THE BASIC RULE OF SUMO.

LEAVE IT TO ME.

WITH THAT IN MIND, WHY DON'T YOU TRY TO SCARE UP SOME RECRUITS?

AH.

ANYWAY, THE FIRST THING TO DO IS LOWER THE STANDARDS A LITTLE SO THAT NEWCOMERS DON'T HAVE TO BE FAT.

HUH?!

LET'S TAKE THESE TWO.

OK.

YOU JUST DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?

I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT THESE TWO ARE THE **LEAST** SUITED FOR THE CLUB.

WAIT!

SORRY, BUT THE REST OF YOU CAN GO.

I TOLD YOU BEFORE, THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO WEAR ONLY A *MAWASHI*.

IDIOT!

AT LEAST CONSIDER THAT GORILLA OVER THERE.

BUT TAKE A LOOK AT THOSE TWO.

TRUE. MOST PEOPLE WOULD BE PRETTY EMBAR-RASSED.

YOU TELL THE AVERAGE PERSON TO STRIP DOWN AND PUT ONE OF THESE BAD BOYS ON, I DON'T THINK THEY'D BE TOO KEEN ON THE IDEA.

BUT THOSE GUYS ACTUALLY WALK AROUND OUTSIDE WITH THAT STUFF ON!

THAT WEIRD MAKEUP FOR NO REASON... I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THAT MASK.

THAT MAKES SENSE.

THEY PROBABLY WOULDN'T THINK TWICE ABOUT WALKING AROUND IN A *MAWASHI*.

THERE'S NO WAY THEY COULD DO THAT WITHOUT A WHOLE LOT OF **GUTS**. YOU COULD EVEN SAY THEY DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT WHAT OTHERS THINK.

WHAT IS IT?

UM, DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT?

THE KIND OF GUYS I'M AFTER ARE THE ONES WHERE YOU CAN HAND 'EM ONE OF THESE AND THEY JUST PUT IT ON WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING.

WHAT?!

IT'S JUST, WE'RE STARTING TO HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THIS WHOLE *MAWASHI* THING...

YOU'RE RIGHT. I KINDA FLEW OFF THE HANDLE THERE... SORRY.

PLEASE CALM DOWN! IF WE START PRESSURING THEM, IT COULD BE TOO MUCH, EVEN FOR GUYS LIKE THESE.

HOW CAN YOU GO OUT LOOKING LIKE **THAT** AND GET EMBARRASSED ABOUT A LOINCLOTH?!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GIVE ME AN ANSWER NOW.

THEN IT'S NO BIG DEAL.

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL TO FEEL A LITTLE EMBARRASSED AT FIRST, BUT YOU GET USED TO IT.

THE NEXT DAY

OK.

JUST TAKE THE REST OF THE DAY TO THINK ABOUT IT, WILL YOU?

I DON'T KNOW. BUT WE PROBABLY SHOULDN'T GET OUR HOPES UP.

I WONDER IF THEY'LL COME BACK TODAY.

YES.

Y-YOU'VE GOT YOUR *MAWASHI* ON! DID YOU PUT THOSE ON YOURSELVES?!

BUT ONCE WE THOUGHT OF IT AS PART OF THE SPORT, IT STOPPED BEING EMBARRASSING... ACTUALLY, WE STARTED FEELING SORT OF PROUD.

AT FIRST, YES.

ARE YOU EMBAR-RASSED?

SORRY FOR ASKING THIS, BUT...

AH! THAT'S GREAT!

YEAH, I'VE BEEN GAINING WEIGHT RECENTLY, TOO.

ACTUALLY, I FEEL LIKE I'VE GOTTEN A LITTLE HEAVIER THESE DAYS...

REALLY? WELL, THANKS VERY MUCH.

UM, THERE'S JUST ONE PROBLEM...

WELCOME TO OUR CLUB!

YOU'VE GOTTEN OVER THE *MAWASHI* AND YOU'RE STARTING TO GAIN WEIGHT... YOU'RE PERFECT!

IT'S JUST, WE'RE NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN SUMO. AT ALL.

GO AHEAD. SAY WHAT IT IS.

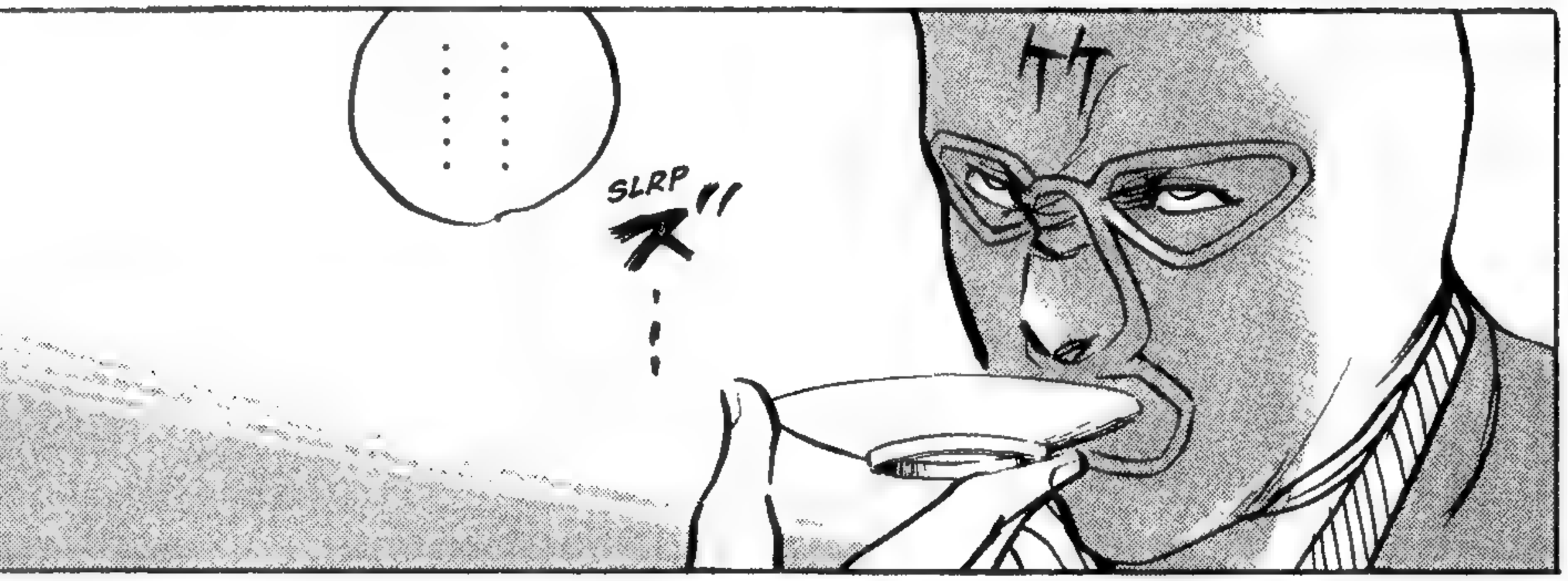
HM? WELL, I'M SURE IT'S NOTHING MAJOR, RIGHT?

I'M JUST GONNA CLOSE MY EYES...

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

**YEAH, THAT'S A PRETTY BIG PROBLEM.**

# CHAPTER 245: **FATBOY SLIM**



NO. IF WE ADD TOO MUCH, IT'LL DROWN OUT THE OTHER FLAVORS.
SHOULD WE ADD SOME MORE MSG?
IT'S BEEN SIMMERING SINCE THIS MORNING.
OH, YEAH. THAT'S SOME GOOD BROTH.
GLB
GLB

MM. THAT'S MELLOWED OUT THE FLAVOR A BIT MORE.

BUT NOT TOO MUCH. JUST A LITTLE WILL DO.

GLB

GLB

WE SHOULD ADD A BIT MORE COOKING SAKE.

GLB

GLB

THAT LOOKS REALLY GOOD.

GLB

GLB

THE SUMO CLUB

YEAH. SOMETHING LIKE THIS, I WOULDN'T MIND PAYING MONEY FOR IN A RESTAURANT.

THIS IS MY FIRST TIME TO EAT CHANKO SOUP*. I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.

GLB

GLB

*THE TRADITIONAL FOOD OF SUMO WRESTLERS.

HM?

RATTLE

I'M SURE IT WON'T BE LONG.

WHERE'S THAT CHANKO? I'M STARVED.

ENJOY! AND PLEASE EAT YOUR FILL!

GLB

GLB

SORRY FOR THE WAIT. HERE'S THE CHANKO.

THIS SURE LOOKS GOOD. OK, LET'S DIG IN.

IT'S HOT, SO BE CAREFUL.

WE'VE BEEN WAITIN' FOR THIS.

WE WORKED REALLY HARD ON IT.

GLB

GLB

LOOK AT THE FRICKIN' MENU!

WHAT IS WRONG?

HUH?

K-CLANG

WAIT, THIS IS ALL WRONG!

YOU DON'T KNOW ANY-THING, DO YOU?!

BUT YOU JUST TOLD US TO MAKE SOME CHANKO!

WHAT?

TODAY'S MENU: CURRY

TODAY WAS SUPPOSED TO BE CURRY! LOOK!

IF I TELL YOU TO GO MAKE SOME CHANKO, IT MEANS TO GO MAKE SOME FOOD! IT DOESN'T MEAN TO GO MAKE CHANKO SOUP!

WHEN A SUMO WRESTLER SAYS "CHANKO," HE MEANS ANY KIND OF FOOD!

THAT'S WHY WHEN I TOLD YOU TO GO MAKE SOME CHANKO, YOU SHOULD'VE SAID, "AND WHAT IS TODAY'S CHANKO?" REMEMBER THAT NEXT TIME!

AH. THAT'S SORT OF A DIFFICULT DISTINCTION.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! THIS IS HOW IT'S DONE IN THE SUMO WORLD!

I THINK SIMPLY TELLING US TO GO MAKE SOME FOOD OR CURRY OR WHAT HAVE YOU WOULD BE MORE HELPFUL.

BUT IF THAT'S THE CASE...

I WANTED TO EAT CURRY TODAY!

Y-YOU'RE NOT GOING TO EAT?

WE'LL JUST SKIP LUNCH AND GO BACK TO PRACTICE!

FOR-GET IT!

I'M FAT ENOUGH AS IT IS!

IF YOU DON'T EAT, YOU WON'T GET FATTER.

BUT...

DOSUKOI!

...

TRY AGAIN!

AGH!

THOMP

BWACK

BWACK

DOSUKOI!

STILL NOT GOOD ENOUGH!

THOMP

AGH!

O-OK.

LET'S TAKE A BREAK.

HUH?! WHERE'D THAT COME FROM ALL OF A SUDDEN?

COULD YOU STOP SAYING "DOSUKOI" ALL THE TIME?

BY THE WAY, I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TELL YOU THIS FOR A WHILE NOW...

THIS IS REAL LIFE! NONE OF US ACTUALLY GO AROUND SAYING "DOSUKOI."

NO, THAT'S JUST THE IMAGE **YOU** HAVE OF SUMO WRESTLERS!

ANYWAY, WE'RE SUMO WRESTLERS! WE HAVE TO SAY "DOSUKOI"!

YOU DID?! HM, THERE ARE SOME PRETTY FRIGHTENING STEREOTYPES ABOUT SUMO OUT THERE.

UM, WE THOUGHT SUMO WRESTLERS SAID THAT, TOO.

HUH?!

NO, I CAN'T SAY I HAVE.

THE THING IS, HAVE YOU **EVER** IN REAL LIFE MET SOME OLD DUDE FROM THE BOONIES WHO'S RECKONED HE'S HAD IT WITH ALL Y'ALL?

FINE, HERE'S AN EXAMPLE. YOU'VE SEEN MOVIES OR WHATEVER WHERE SOME OLD GUY FROM THE BOONIES COMES UP AND SAYS HE "RECKONS" HE'S "HAD IT WITH ALL Y'ALL" OR SOMETHING, RIGHT?

OK.

I'M GOING TO SET YOU ALL STRAIGHT, STARTING WITH THE BASICS.

ME?!

THAT INCLUDES YOU.

SEE? THE SAME GOES FOR THE ASSUMPTIONS YOU HAVE ABOUT SUMO... LIKE THAT CHANKO THING FROM BEFORE. PEOPLE HAVE ALL THESE IDEAS ABOUT SUMO!

I LOVE THAT PLACE! BUT NO, I HAVEN'T ACTUALLY BEEN THERE.

UM, NO.

BUT HAVE ANY OF YOU ACTUALLY BEEN THERE?

LET'S START WITH **RYOGOKU**. YOU ALL KNOW THAT IT'S IN TOKYO AND IT'S THE CENTER OF OUR SUMO WORLD...

OK.

I WANT YOU TO TRY DRAWING IT FOR ME.

WELL, WHAT DO YOU ALL IMAGINE IT LOOKS LIKE?

SHOW ME.

I'M FINISHED.

SUMO STABLE

CHANKO

CHANKO RESTAURANT

SUMO STABLE

YOU KNOW, THERE ARE A MILLION THINGS I'D LIKE TO SAY ABOUT THIS PICTURE... BUT IF WE'RE GOING TO DO IT ONE BY ONE, LET'S START WITH THESE BUILDINGS IN THE BACKGROUND.

WHAT? IS SOME-THING NOT RIGHT?

I KNEW IT.

LOOK, RYOGOKU'S GOT COFFEE SHOPS, OFFICE BUILDINGS AND, OF COURSE, CONVENIENCE STORES, JUST LIKE ANY OTHER DISTRICT.

YEAH, WELL, IT'S A SUMO DISTRICT, RIGHT?

THERE'S NOTHING BUT CHANKO RESTAURANTS AND SUMO STABLES!

THERE YOU GO WITH YOUR WRONG IDEAS AGAIN.

I THINK IT'D BE STRANGE FOR A SUMO WRESTLER TO GO TO A COFFEE SHOP.

UM, IF YOU DON'T MIND ME SAYING SO...

IF THERE WEREN'T ANY COFFEE SHOPS, WHAT THE HECK WOULD YOU DO WHEN YOU WANTED A CUP OF COFFEE? YOU THINK SUMO WRESTLERS GO AROUND GRINDING THEIR OWN BEANS?!

HM? LIKE WHAT?

IF SUMO WRESTLERS STARTED GOING TO COFFEE SHOPS, IT'D BE LIKE THIS!

I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S STRANGE!

THAT'S ACTUALLY SORT OF CRUEL! WE SUMO WRESTLERS GO TO ATMs AND PACHINKO PARLORS AND MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS JUST LIKE ANYONE ELSE.

OH. REALLY?

EVEN THE WAITER IS A SUMO WRESTLER!

No matter how you slice it, that's just weird!

LET ME TELL YOU THE FIRST THING THAT'S WEIRD ABOUT THIS PICTURE...

EVEN I SORT OF SUSPECTED THAT RYOGOKU MIGHT BE MORE ORDINARY THAN PEOPLE THINK...

THESE IDEAS OF YOURS ARE WAY OFF!

ANYWAY, WHEN WE'RE WALKING AROUND OUTSIDE, WE PUT ON LIGHT KIMONOS, RIGHT?!

I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW MANY MISCONCEPTIONS YOU GUYS HAVE... IT REALLY MAKES ME SAD.

WHAT THE HELL KIND OF "ADORA-TION" IS THAT?!

BUT EVERY TIME I THINK ABOUT THAT, MY ADORATION CRUMBLES AND I CAN'T GET TO SLEEP AT NIGHT.

I KNOW I'M STILL INEXPERIENCED, BUT I THINK I'VE SEEN MY SHARE OF THINGS AND HAVE TAKEN THEM AT FACE VALUE. THIS TIME, I'VE TRIED TO LEARN WHAT I CAN ABOUT SUMO...

HUH?

WELL, DO YOU MIND IF I TRY DRAWING MY IMPRESSION OF SUMO?

THEY CAN DO OTHER THINGS...IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, OF COURSE THEY DO! THEY'RE PEOPLE JUST LIKE US!

AND I THINK THAT JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE SUMO WRESTLERS, THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY'RE ALWAYS WEARING *MAWASHI* AND PRACTICING SUMO!

THANK YOU.

HMPH. IT LOOKS LIKE YOU, AT LEAST, UNDERSTAND. THAT MAKES ME GLAD.

LET ME SEE.

I'M DONE!

OK!

SURE, GO AHEAD AND DRAW YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF SUMO.

YAAY

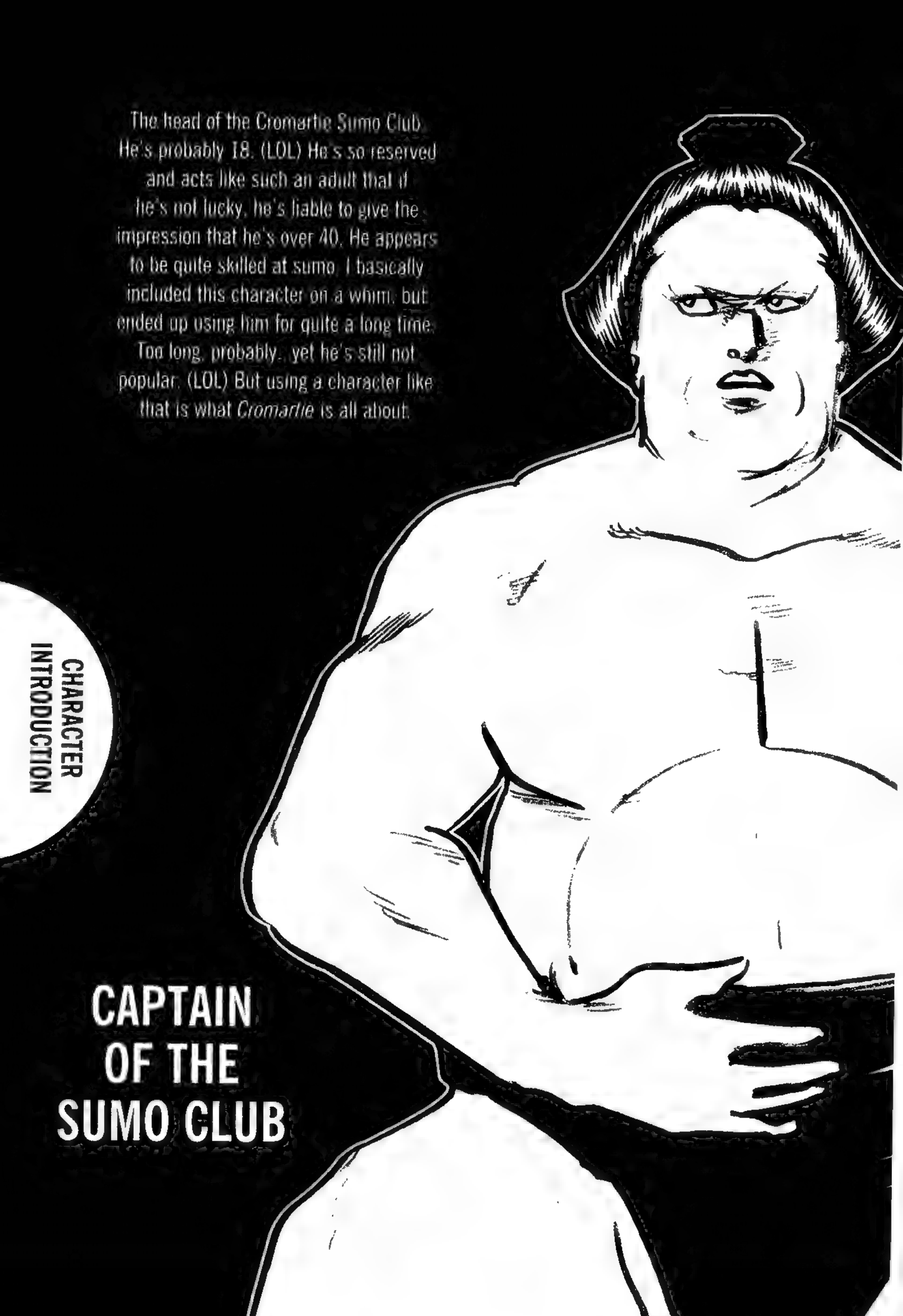
GOOD LUCK!

YAAY

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO **LEAST** UNDERSTANDS...

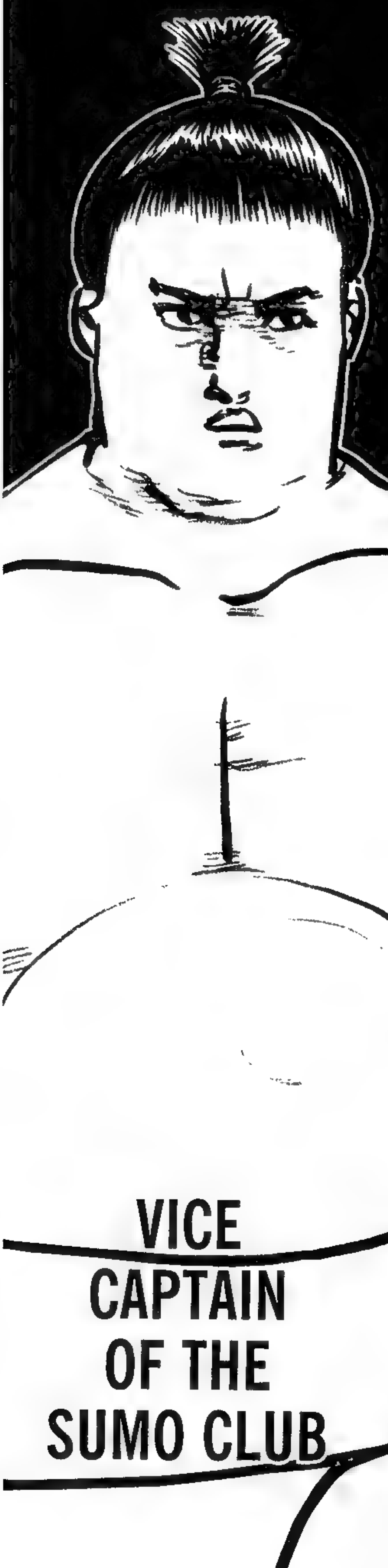
**BUT HE WAS CLOSE.**

The head of the Cromartie Sumo Club. He's probably 18. (LOL) He's so reserved and acts like such an adult that if he's not lucky, he's liable to give the impression that he's over 40. He appears to be quite skilled at sumo. I basically included this character on a whim, but ended up using him for quite a long time. Too long, probably, yet he's still not popular. (LOL) But using a character like that is what *Cromartie* is all about.



CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

# CAPTAIN OF THE SUMO CLUB



I'm still not sure if this guy is good at sumo or not, but he sure does love it. He appears to be a somewhat recent disciple, as he hasn't even finished growing his hair out yet (which makes him look a bit like Diagoro from *Lone Wolf and Cub*). He really respects the captain of the sumo club, and the two share a great degree of trust.

For them to want to somehow make the club work with just the two of them really tugs at the heartstrings...yet he doesn't know a thing about Ryogoku. Does he really even like sumo?

**CHARACTER INTRODUCTION**

**VICE CAPTAIN OF THE SUMO CLUB**

# CHAPTER 246: **WIDTH OF A CIRCLE**

WHO ARE YOU?!

GOOD MORNING.

KAMIYAMA. IT'S A PLEASURE.

Application

I BROUGHT HIM. HE'D LIKE TO JOIN.

HM. YES, I DID.

YOU MENTIONED THAT THE CLUB NEEDED ONE MORE PERSON, SO...

WE'LL NEED FIVE MEMBERS TO ENTER THE TEAM COMPETITION.

YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.

IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE THE PRELIMINARIES FOR THE ALL-JAPAN TOURNAMENT KICK OFF.

OH. I HAVEN'T MENTIONED THAT YET, HAVE I?

TEAM COMPETITION? WHAT IS THAT?

AND THIS ALL-JAPAN TOURNAMENT...

THAT'S RIGHT.

WHAT?! THE ALL-JAPAN TOURNAMENT?

OF COURSE IT'S RELATED TO SUMO! WHY THE HELL WOULD THE SUMO CLUB BE INTERESTED IN AN ALL-JAPAN TOURNAMENT IF IT **WASN'T** ABOUT SUMO?!

IS IT RELATED TO SUMO?

TRUE ENOUGH.

AND THIS GUY BARELY JOINED TODAY.

BUT WE'RE STILL AMATEURS. FOR US TO SUDDENLY GO COMPETING IN A NATIONAL TOURNAMENT...

UM, YOU SEEM SORT OF LIKE EVEN WHEN YOU STARTED, YOU WERE ALREADY A PRO.

EVEN I WAS A BEGINNER WHEN I FIRST STARTED!

LISTEN, EVERYONE'S A BEGINNER WHEN THEY FIRST START OUT.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS ARE SPIRIT AND DETERMINATION!

LISTEN, IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE SCARED JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE A BEGINNER, YOU'LL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING!

YES, SIR. I'VE HAD AN INTEREST IN SUMO FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

KAMIYAMA-KUN, YOU HAVE THAT KIND OF SPIRIT, RIGHT? THAT'S WHY YOU DECIDED TO JOIN OUR CLUB.

UH, I DON'T KNOW THAT I'D CALL SUMO A TRADITIONAL PERFORMING ART...

I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT, AS ONE OF THE TRADITIONAL PERFORMING ARTS, SUMO IS ESSENTIAL TO THE PRESERVATION OF OUR NATION'S CULTURE.

WHAT?! WHAT IS EVERYONE'S PROBLEM WITH THE *MAWASHI*?!

I WOULDN'T SAY THAT'S ENTIRELY ACCURATE.

AT LEAST YOU'LL BE ABLE TO WEAR A *MAWASHI* WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS.

WHAT-EVER.

FINE. I GUESS THIS'LL WORK ITSELF OUT.

BUT I WILL ENDEAVOR TO BECOME USED TO IT.

IT'S NOT SO MUCH A PROBLEM WITH THE *MAWASHI* AS IT IS... A PROBLEM WITH THE NAKEDNESS.

DON'T WORRY. I'VE ALREADY PREPARED FOR THIS.

DON'T YOU THINK WE MIGHT NEED A LITTLE MORE EXPERIENCE?

BUT SIR, ENTERING THE ALL-JAPAN COMPETITION LIKE THIS...

SOME PLACE CALLED **BASS.**

A PRACTICE COM-PETITION?! WHAT'S THE OTHER HIGH SCHOOL?

I'VE ARRANGED A PRACTICE COMPETITION WITH ANOTHER HIGH SCHOOL.

AH! I'LL GO GET IT READY!

ANYWAY, WE SHOULD TAKE OUR TIME AND TALK ABOUT THIS OVER SOME CHANKO.

OH, YES. WHEN YOU MENTION SUMO WRESTLERS, IT HAS TO BE CHANKO. I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY IT AT LEAST ONCE.

REALLY?

I'M QUITE LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS. I'VE NEVER EATEN CHANKO BEFORE.

YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING, DO YOU?

HEY, THIS IS CURRY!

RIGHT NOW, WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT BASS.

YOU CAN EXPLAIN LATER.

IN THE SUMO WORLD, "CHANKO" JUST MEANS FOOD. IT--

THEY'RE AMONG THE BEST OF THE BEST. IN ALL-TOKYO COMPETITIONS, BASS IS ALWAYS IN THE TOP EIGHT.

YES. THEY HAVE GOOD SUMO.

SO, DO THEY HAVE GOOD SUMO?

IN TERMS OF TOUGHNESS, HOW TOUGH ARE WE COMPARED TO BASS?

SO...

UM, YOU DO?

I THINK THIS IS JUST THE KIND OF TOUGH OPPONENT WE NEED FOR OUR PRACTICE COMPETITION.

HOPELESSLY OUTCLASSED. THE LOWEST OF THE LOW.

. . . . . .

WEAK.

. . . . . .

NONE.

AND HOW MANY TOURNAMENTS HAS OUR SCHOOL CLUB WON?

YOU MEAN...

HUH?

NONE.

THEN HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE LOST?

SHUT UP! JUST SHUT UP!

THAT'S HOW BAD THINGS HAVE BEEN?

HUH?!

YES. WE'VE NEVER ENTERED A TOURNAMENT.

COME ON, STOP. THAT'S ENOUGH.

BEFORE I JOINED, THE CAPTAIN WAS RUNNING THE WHOLE CLUB BY HIMSELF!

I SAID THAT'S ENOUGH.

OUR CAPTAIN IS REALLY TOUGH! IF THE CLUB HAD MORE MEMBERS, WE WOULD'VE--

THE TRUTH IS...

THE TRUTH IS...

HM?

SORRY, BUT DO YOU MIND IF I ASK SOMETHING SORT OF RUDE?

I HAVE TO TAKE THAT SERI-OUSLY.

THE FACT WE COULDN'T GET MORE MEMBERS IS PROOF OF MY OWN INCOMPETENCE.

BASTARD! YOU SAY ONE MORE THING LIKE THAT AND YOU'VE HAD IT!

IF YOU'VE NEVER EVEN BEEN IN A TOURNAMENT, I'M NOT SURE YOU SHOULD BE WEARING YOUR HAIR* LIKE THAT...

*SPECIFICALLY, IN THE OICHO STYLE USED BY WRESTLERS IN EITHER OF THE TOP TWO PROFESSIONAL DIVISIONS.

SHP

ENOUGH.

.....

I REALLY APPRECIATE YOU GUYS.

WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

HE'S PROSTRATING HIMSELF!

THIS IS HOW MUCH YOU CARE ABOUT SUMO. IT'S YOUR PASSION. I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL TOO WELL.

I SEE.

COME ON, THAT'S ENOUGH. RAISE YOUR HEAD!

YOUR COMING HERE HAS LET US FINALLY ENTER THE TOURNAMENT.

FINE.

WOULD YOU PLEASE TELL US?

BUT WHAT WAS IT THAT INITIALLY ATTRACTED YOU TO SUMO?

BUT WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I WAS RAISED FARTHER OUT BY THE COAST.

RIGHT NOW I LIVE IN TOKYO.

IT WAS BACK WHEN I WAS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...

THINKING BACK, IT REALLY WAS A HOMELY LITTLE PLACE.

IT WAS A FISHING VILLAGE, SO SMALL THAT THERE WAS PRACTICALLY NOTHING TO IT. THE ONLY THINGS TO DO FOR FUN WERE FISH, PLAY WITH OUR TOPS OR GO SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN.

YAY

YAY

THE KIND OF DELICIOUS THAT MAKES MEMORIES.

THAT MAKES IT REALLY DELICIOUS...

TO GET THE TASTE OUT OF KOMBU, YOU FIRST HAVE TO DRY IT.

THE AREA WAS KNOWN FOR ITS KOMBU SEAWEED.

HUH?

ISN'T THERE A WAY YOU COULD USE THIS FOR SOMETHING ELSE?

ONE DAY, IT HIT ME.

A *MAWASHI*!

THAT'S WHEN I THOUGHT OF IT...

THAT'S WHAT GOT ME INTERESTED IN SUMO.

I THINK KOMBU'S BETTER WHEN YOU JUST EAT IT.

UH...

**LIKE IN SOUPS.**

# CHAPTER 247: **SUPER SOUL FIGHTER**

HRAA

HRAA

YEAH. THIS IS ON A WHOLE DIFFERENT LEVEL FROM OUR SCHOOL.

THEY AREN'T CALLED "THE POWERHOUSE" FOR NOTHING.

HRAA

I WANT YOU TO THINK OF TODAY'S PRACTICE MATCH AS A JUNIOR ASKING THE SENIOR TO SPAR.

NOW LISTEN.

YES, PLEASE DO.

I SUPPOSE I'LL GO ANNOUNCE THAT WE'RE HERE.

YES, SIR.

YOU NEED TO BE HUMBLE AND TREAT YOUR OPPONENTS WITH RESPECT.

LET'S SEE...

WHO SHOULD I SPEAK TO?

UM, EXCUSE ME.

YEAH, WHAT?

I'M FROM CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL. WE MADE AN APPOINTMENT FOR A PRACTICE MATCH TODAY.

HUH?

NOPE.

YOU KNOW ANYTHIN' ABOUT CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL?

CRO-MARTIE HIGH SCHOOL?

. . . . . .

WE CAN'T GO REMEMBERIN' ALL YOU GUYS ONE BY ONE!

THE THING IS, OUR SCHOOL'S SO TOUGH THAT WE GET A LOT OF PEOPLE PUTTIN' IN REQUESTS FOR MATCHES LIKE THIS.

YEAH, WE KNOW THAT.

BUT WE HAVE AN APPOINT-MENT FOR A PRACTICE MATCH...

UM...

JUST WAIT HERE A MINUTE, DUDE.

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO SPEAK SO ARROGANTLY? IT'S REALLY UNCALLED FOR.

I BELIEVE I'VE SHOWN YOU THE PROPER RESPECT. DON'T YOU FEEL YOU'RE BEING A BIT RUDE?

HUH?

I'M VERY SORRY!

EVEN IF YOU ARE OUR SENIORS, ISN'T IT STANDARD TO SPEAK MORE POLITELY TOWARD SOMEONE YOU'VE JUST MET?

WHAT'D YOU JUST SAY?

YOU SHOULD'VE JUST SAID SO IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ABOUT.

AAH.

WE'VE COME FOR A PRACTICE MATCH. IF YOU HAVE A WAITING ROOM, MIGHT I ASK THAT YOU PLEASE GUIDE US THERE?

NHG!

WE'RE BUSY, YOU KNOW.

YOU SHOULDN'T GO BLABBERING ABOUT ALL THAT OTHER BORING SHIT.

PLEASE CONTROL YOURSELF!

THOSE SONS OF BITCHES!

THANK YOU.

FOLLOW US.

GRRR

WE HAVE TO BE HUMBLE. THEY'RE THE SENIORS HERE.

YOU HEARD WHAT THE CAPTAIN SAID, YES?

!

IHIT

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

THIS IS IT.

THIS IS THE ONLY OPEN ROOM WE'VE GOT. THAT'S HOW IT GOES.

UM, WHAT IS THIS?

HOW COULD THIS BE THE WAITING ROOM?

WHAT THE HELL?! IT'S JUST A STORAGE ROOM!

CAPTAIN...

WHETHER YOUR WAITING ROOM IS CLEAN OR NOT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR MATCH.

EVERYONE CALM YOURSELVES. THIS WILL BE FINE.

FEEL FREE TO USE THIS. HEH.

OH, YEAH.

WE CAN'T SIT ON THAT!

BUT THE FLOOR'S ALL COVERED WITH TRASH.

A STRAW MAT?!

HUH?

BWSH

HERE.

THEY MUST HAVE CHAIRS SOME-WHERE!

THEY'RE MAKING FOOLS OF US!

DAMN!

SLAM

YEAH, MAKE YOUR-SELVES COMFY. HEH.

YOU CAN LIE DOWN ON IT IF YOU WANT.

. . . .

THIS DIRTY ROOM... THIS TATTERED OLD MAT...IT'S A PRETTY GOOD REFLECTION OF THE RANK WE'RE AT.

CALM DOWN.

HITTING THEM WOULD BE EASY--BUT WHAT WOULD IT ACCOMPLISH? RESORTING TO VIOLENCE WOULD EXCLUDE US FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE TOURNAMENT. IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT?

NO!

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE! I'M GOING TO BEAT THE HELL OUT OF THOSE TWO GUYS!

IF ANYONE HERE HAS IT TOUGH, IT'S THE CAPTAIN.

YEAAH

WHOAA

THE MATCH BEGINS

WHO ARE THESE CHUMPS?

HEY, CHECK OUT THAT GUY WITH THE MAKEUP. AND THAT MASK!

I TOLD YOU, I'M JUST HAPPY TO HAVE YOU GUYS ON BOARD.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IF ANYONE WANTS TO LAUGH, LET 'EM LAUGH!

WE'VE BEEN SELFISH...

WE'RE SORRY, CAPTAIN.

YOU!

HUH?

WELL, WELL. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL, BUT I STILL HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN...

THAT'S OYAMA, BASS'S TEAM CAPTAIN. HE'S WON SO MANY CONSECUTIVE PRO TOURNAMENTS THAT HE SET A NEW RECORD.

WHO'S THAT GUY? HE LOOKS TOUGH.

WHAT?!

YOU WERE THE ONLY GUY THAT COULD EVER BEAT ME.

ER!

WHAT'S WITH THE MASK? AND THE MAKEUP? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU RUNNING HERE, A CIRCUS?

ANY-WAY...

THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.

YEAH, YOU'VE GOT A POINT.

YOU SHUT UP! WE MAY BE A BUNCH OF LOSERS, BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE HOW TOUGH OUR CAPTAIN IS!

EVEN IF YOU'RE HURTIN' FOR MEMBERS, THESE GUYS ARE THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL! HA HA!

NATURALLY, THE LAST TWO STANDING ARE GONNA BE YOU AND ME...AND I LOOK FORWARD TO KNOCKIN' YOU DOWN.

TODAY'S MATCH WILL BE AN ELIMINATION BOUT.

SEE YOU IN THE RING.

ALL OF YOU LISTEN UP. YOU'RE JUST BEGINNERS, WHICH MEANS THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN GO OUT THERE AND WIN RIGHT OFF THE BAT. AND I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO.

HUH? LOOK, I DON'T CARE IF YOU LOSE. IF YOU GET KNOCKED ON YOUR ASS, FINE-- BUT DON'T LOSE TO THIS GUY IN **SPIRIT**! YOU NEED TO GO OUT THERE AND GIVE IT YOUR ALL!

UM, SIR? ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT SOMEONE LIKE ME GOING FIRST?

CAPTAIN...

SO LONG AS YOU GIVE IT EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT, THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH LOSING. JUST LEAVE THE REST TO ME.

CAPTAIN?

THANKS TO YOU, I CAN GET BACK INTO THE RING AGAIN.

I REALLY AM GRATEFUL TO YOU GUYS. FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

WHAT?

I DIDN'T GET BACK INTO THE RING!

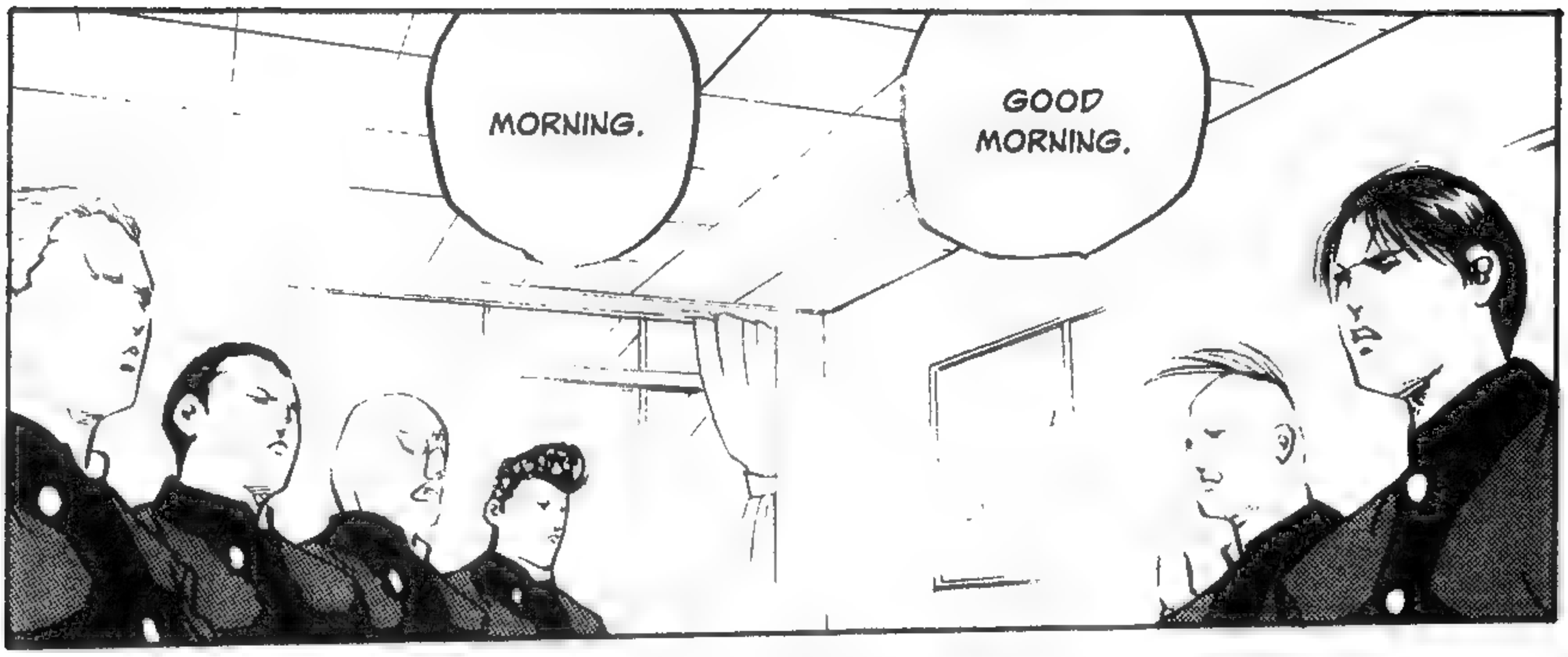
WHOAA

YEAAH

MASK HAS GONE AND BEAT THEM ALL ON HIS OWN.

**MASKED TAKENOUCHI IS PRETTY TOUGH!**

# CHAPTER 248: **ILLEGAL ALIEN**



AND ACCORDING TO HIM, A CERTAIN RACE OF EXTRATERRESTRIALS IS PLANNING TO DESTROY EARTH.
HM. AND?
ONE OF MY FRIENDS IS A SPECIALIST ON EXTRA-TERRESTRIALS.

I SEE.

WHAT?! NEXT WEEK? THAT'S WAY TOO SOON!

BUT HE SAID PROBABLY SOMETIME NEXT WEEK.

WELL, HE DIDN'T HAVE AN EXACT DATE OR ANYTHING.

WHEN IS THIS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN?

IT'S ALL SO SUDDEN. THERE ISN'T EVEN ANY TIME TO PREPARE!

SORRY. I JUST HEARD IT MYSELF LAST WEEK.

LISTEN, YOU NEED TO HURRY AND TELL US THAT SORT OF THING. IT'S MOST UPSETTING.

WE HAVE TO GET READY FOR WAR WITH AN ALIEN RACE, RIGHT?

PREPARE? PREPARE HOW?

THE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES?! WHAT GOOD DO YOU THINK THEY'LL BE AGAINST ALIENS?

SCRATCH THAT. THE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES WOULD BE A BETTER CHOICE.

ONE THING WE COULD DO IS TELL THE POLICE.

NOW HOLD ON A MINUTE. YOU'RE JUST LETTING YOUR IMAGINATIONS RUN WILD.

THEY'RE GOING TO COME AT US WITH LASER BEAMS AND THINGS LIKE THAT.

THE WEAPONS THEY USE IN REAL LIFE COULD BE A LOT LESS FLAMBOYANT.

IF YOU THINK THAT ALIENS = LASER BEAMS, YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING WAY TOO MANY MOVIES.

WAIT! THE ALIENS COULD'VE ALREADY LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR THEIR INVASION AND DISGUISED THEMSELVES AS COPS!

ANYWAY, IT'S STILL NOT TOO LATE. WE SHOULD TELL THE POLICE.

IN THAT CASE, WE'D PROBABLY WIN, HUH?

FOR EXAMPLE, THEY COULD COME AT US THROWING ROCKS.

THERE'S GOTTA BE SOMETHING, RIGHT? **RIGHT**?!

IT'S HOPELESS!

THEN THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO!

WE HUMANS ARE DESTINED FOR DEATH ANYWAY. THE MOST CONSTRUCTIVE THING WE CAN DO IS LEAD FULL LIVES SO WE MAY DIE WITHOUT REGRET.

HUH?!

WE SHOULD ACCEPT THE INEVITABLE.

YEAH! I'M NOT GONNA BE BEATEN BY SOME DAMN ALIEN! I'M ON FIRE!

YOU'RE RIGHT! LET'S DO IT!

WE'RE AT THE END OF OUR LIVES-- SHOULDN'T WE USE THAT TIME TO DO ALL THE THINGS WE HAVEN'T DONE YET?

I SAY WE CHALLENGE THESE ALIENS AND LIVE OUR REMAINING WEEK TO THE FULLEST!

OK! LET'S DO THIS, GUYS!

THEN LET'S MEET AGAIN NEXT WEEK.

PLEASE GIVE WHAT YOU CAN!

Donations

Freddie

YEAH. THAT WAY, I'M GOOD TO DIE WHENEVER.

YOU'RE CHUCKIN' YOUR PORN?

ONE WEEK LATER

Y-YES SIR.

I'LL HAVE EVERYTHING ON THE MENU.

HMM...

I'VE DONE ALL THE THINGS I HADN'T DONE YET, SO YEAH! THE EARTH COULD GO UP IN FLAMES AND I'D HAVE NOTHING TO BE UPSET ABOUT.

NO PROBLEM! NOTHING COULD UPSET ME NOW!

WILL YOU ALL BE ABLE TO EXPIRE WITH NO REGRETS?

WELL, TOMORROW MARKS THE DESTRUCTION OF PLANET EARTH.

WE OWE IT ALL TO HAYA-SHIDA. THANKS, MAN.

YOU'LL BE DEAD ANYWAY, SO THERE'S NO USE KEEPING THAT STUFF AROUND.

WHOA! GOOD JOB.

AND I'VE BURNED THROUGH ALL OF MY SAVINGS!

DON'T TELL ME IT WAS ALL A LIE!

HUH?! WHAT IS IT?

ACTUALLY, ABOUT THAT ALIEN INVASION...

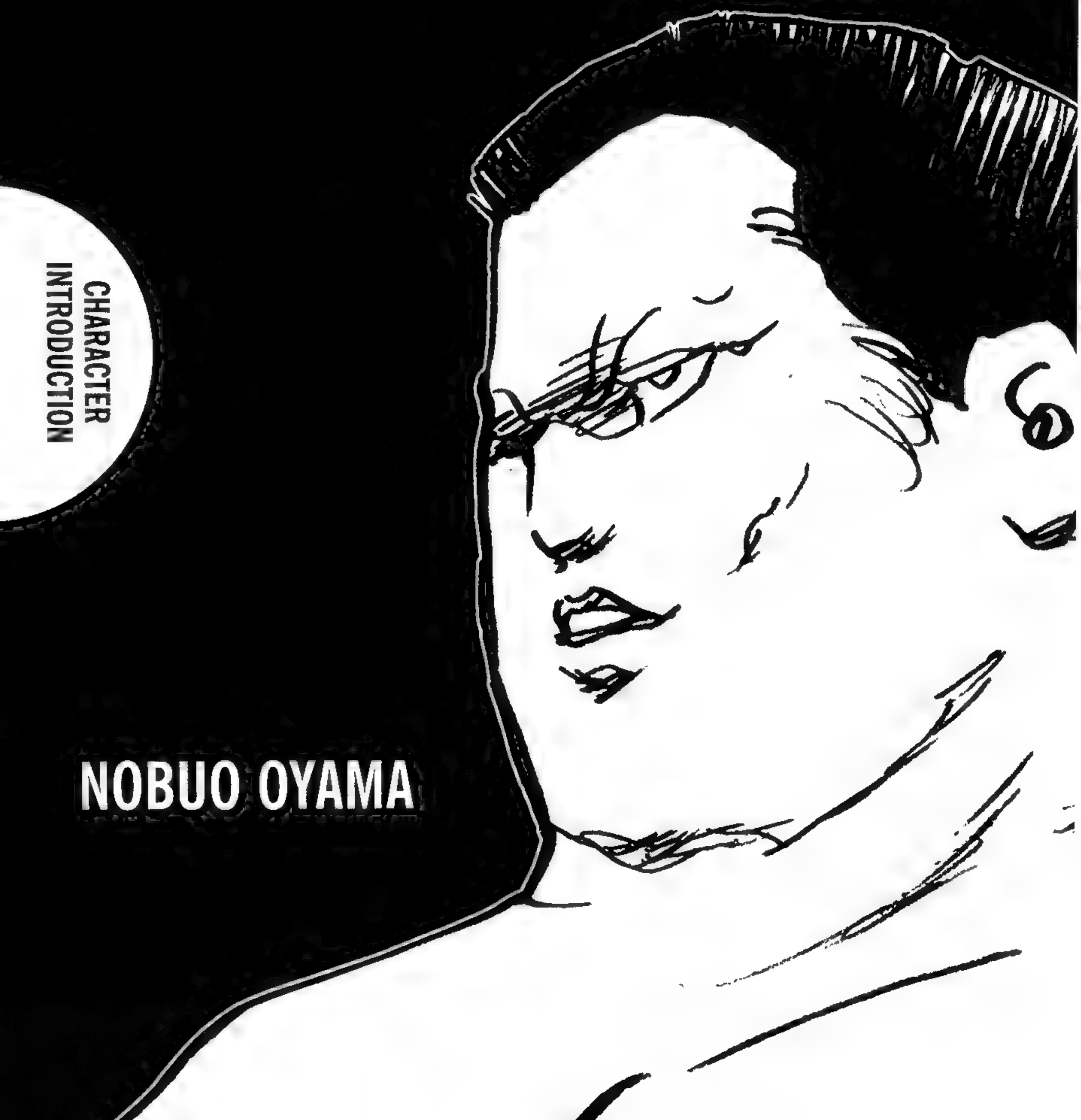
IT'S BEEN PUSHED BACK ANOTHER 10 DAYS.

THAT'S PRETTY UPSETTING!

Starting tomorrow, I'll have to go without food...

# UH, IS THAT NEWS REALLY UPSETTING?

The head of the Bass High School Sumo Club, which boasts an impressive number of members. Oyama is a formidable-looking man with an attitude to match. He's a talented sumo wrestler, having (as we saw in the story) set a new record for consecutive wins. Apparently, the only person who's ever beaten him is the head of the Cromartie High School Sumo Club. Oyama has the heady "heard of him somewhere before" air about him that denotes a truly world-class rival. I think it's fairly obvious from reading the story, but Oyama's climactic showdown with the head of the Cromartie Sumo Club basically gets scrapped. That's this manga for you.



CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

# NOBUO OYAMA

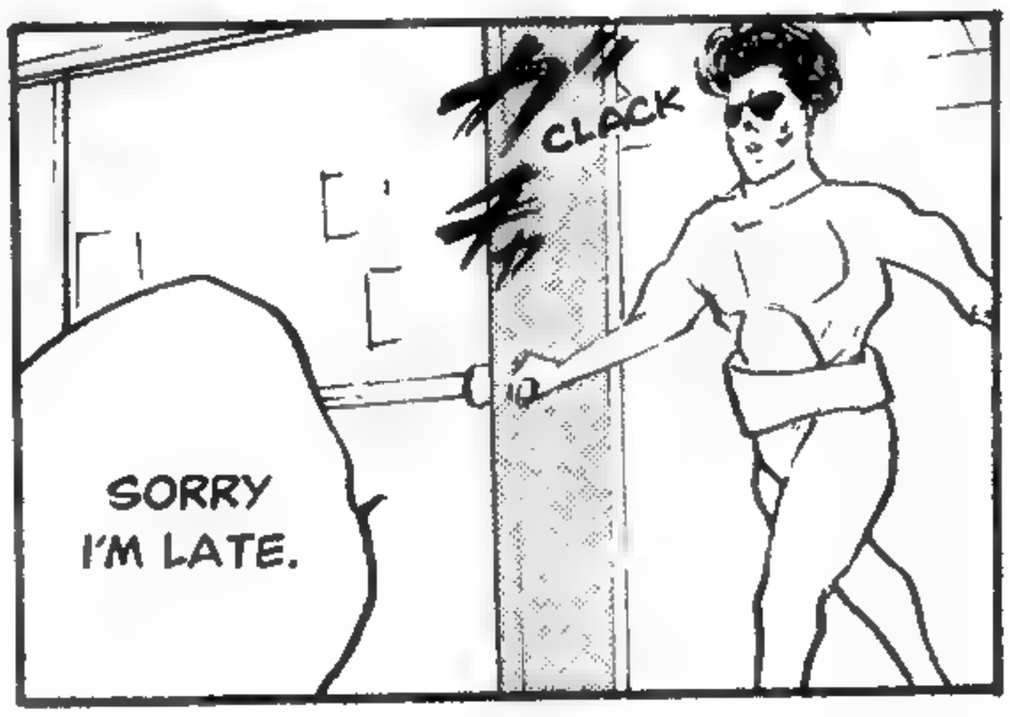
# CROMARTIE NEWS

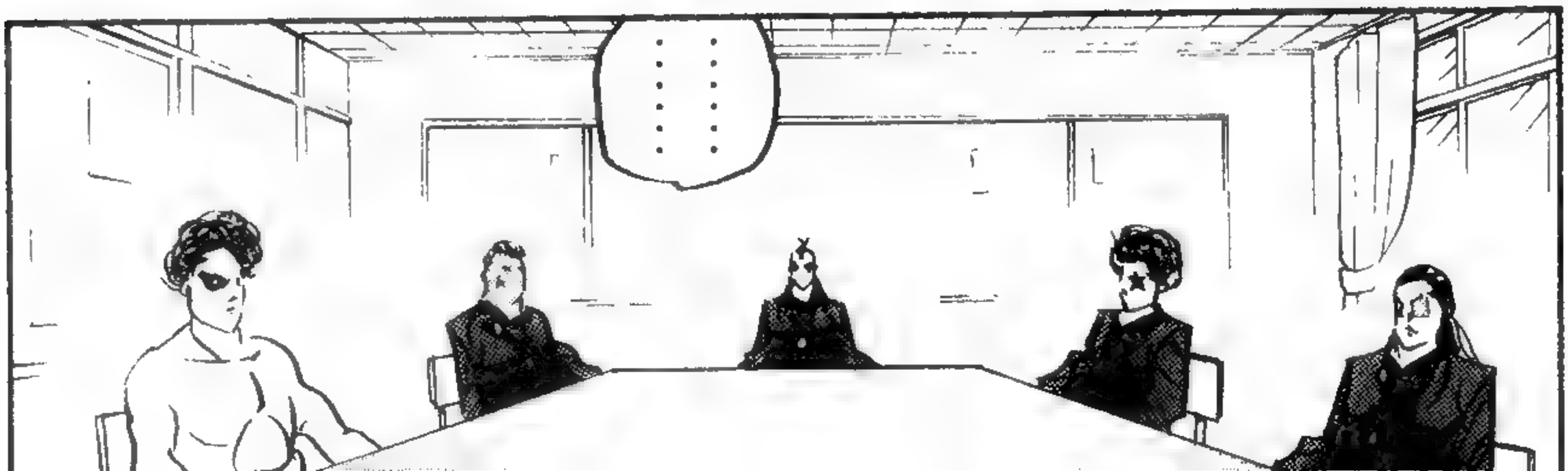
## SHEDDING LIGHT ON WHY THIS VOLUME IS NAMED "THE PHOENIX STORY"!

For some time now, each volume of *Cromartie* has featured a subtitle. For the most part they can be written off as meaningless, but for diehard fans of *Cromartie* in its collected graphic novel form, they (probably) represent an essential part of the reading experience. Such readers tend to view them with impassioned gazes, thinking such thoughts as, "What kind of subtitle will he come up with next? I can't wait!" or "This has nothing at all to do with what's inside!" This time around, because ~~it was getting to be a pain~~ I wanted to give the readers a chance to contribute to the creation of the manga, I decided to field ideas for a subtitle from the reading audience. Pretty great, huh?

Several excellent suggestions were received via HUDSON's cell phone site, which rather subtly (but for real) offered visitors the chance to contribute their ideas...and of these, we decided to use "The Phoenix Story," a suggestion by a visitor going by the name of Katie Kichi. The good employees at HUDSON were rather skeptical that we would use any of these suggestions at all, so we were able to get a nice, rousing surprise out of them. Congratulations, Katie Kichi! But please stop using such a weird online name! We'll be sending an extra-special present your way!

# CHAPTER 249: **THROW AWAY YOUR TELEVISION**





HUH?!

I THOUGHT WE COULD WATCH TV.

FOR TODAY'S MEETING...

PEOPLE ARE SAYING THAT SHOWS ARE SIMPLY NO GOOD... THAT COMPARED TO THE SHOWS OF OLD, THESE NEWER ONES ARE BORING AND LACK CONTENT.

IT SEEMS THE QUALITY OF TELEVISION SHOWS HAS BEEN IN A SHARP DECLINE RECENTLY.

BUT HAS TELEVISION WELL AND TRULY GONE TO THE CRAPPER?

HMPH. CELEBRITIES THAT SPEAK FOULLY... "PERFORMERS" WITH NO ABILITY TO ACTUALLY PERFORM...TRUE, THESE HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER.

OH, THAT. YEAH, MY DAD ALWAYS SAYS STUFF LIKE THAT.

WHEN DID WE BECOME AN ORGANIZATION LIKE THAT?!

HOLD ON A MINUTE THERE, BOSS!

FINDING THE ANSWER TO THAT IS ALSO ONE OF OUR ASSIGNED DUTIES, IS IT NOT?

THE MASSES SAY THAT TODAY'S TELEVISION IS GARBAGE--BUT SINCE WHEN HAVE WE BADASSES FOLLOWED WHAT THE MASSES SAY?! WE CANNOT!

NONE OF YOU GET IT, DO YOU?

THIS HAS STARTED TO FEEL SORT OF LIKE A LETTERS TO THE EDITOR COLUMN...

BEEP

VERY WELL. LET US WATCH SOME TELEVISION AND SEE FOR OURSELVES.

I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT.

WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT, YOU'VE GOT A POINT.

COME ON, BOSS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

I'M PUSH-ING THE BUTTON BUT IT WON'T TURN ON.

HM?

11° POP

BUT FIRST ...

PER-HAPS.

OH. MAYBE THE BATTERIES ARE OUT OF JUICE.

IT SEEMS LIKE EVERY-ONE DOES. I WONDER IF IT ACTUALLY WORKS.

I-I DO THAT!

BOSS, YOU DO THAT TOO?!

SQK

SQK

I WILL GIVE THEM A LITTLE TURN.

WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU, BOSS.

VERY WELL, LET'S TRY AGAIN.

THE PROBABILITY IS SLIGHT, BUT ON OCCASION IT DOES BRING THEM BACK FROM THE DEAD.

THEN IT'S NO HOPE!

I ALREADY HAVE. MANY TIMES.

COME ON, BOSS. HURRY UP AND PUSH IT.

MAYBE THE TV ITSELF IS BROKEN. IF THAT'S SO, CHANGING OUT THE BATTERIES IN THE REMOTE WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.

HOLD ON A MINUTE!

IT CAN'T BE HELPED. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO BUY SOME NEW BATTERIES.

AH, I GETCHA. IT'D COST MORE MONEY TO HIRE A REPAIR GUY.

WE WILL HAVE TO BUY NEW BATTERIES TO FIND OUT WHICH IS THE CASE.

YES, THESE ARE POSSI-BILITIES. HOWEVER...

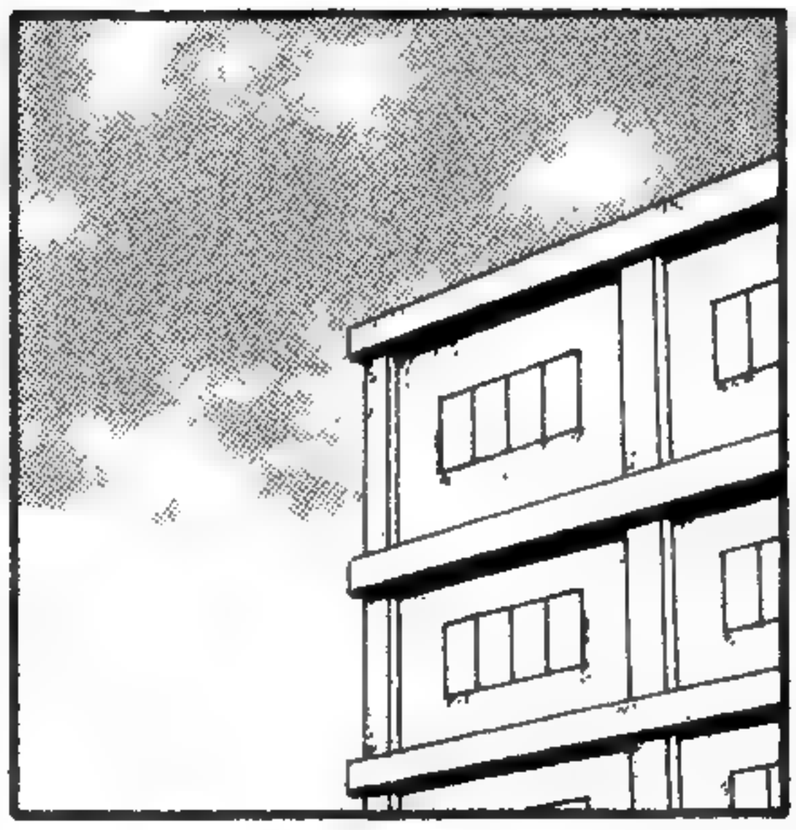
ALSO, THE REMOTE ITSELF COULD BE BROKEN.

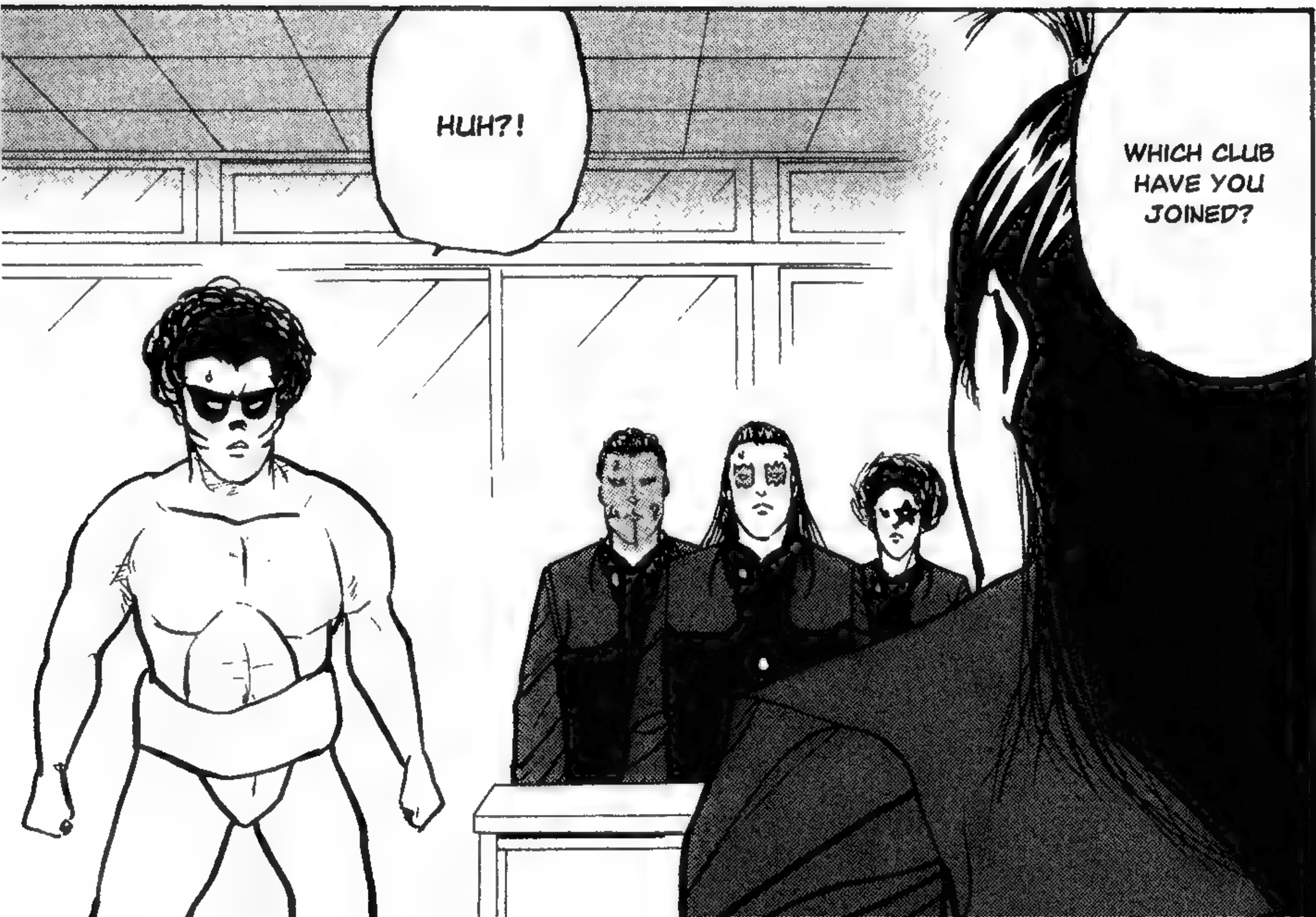
SURE, LEAVE IT TO ME.

WOULD YOU PLEASE GO BUY SOME BATTERIES?

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TOPIC OF TELEVISION?

# CHAPTER 250: **OUT IN THE WORLD**





S-SURE.

I WILL GUESS. JUST GIVE ME A MOMENT.

ON SECOND THOUGHT, DON'T TELL ME. FIGURING OUT WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO SHOULD POSE NO CHALLENGE FOR ONE SUCH AS MYSELF.

INDEED. I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU'D CHOOSE SOMETHING SO TYPICAL. STILL, THIS IS PAR THE COURSE FOR A MEMBER OF THE FOUR GREAT ONES.

UH, NO.

I WILL BEGIN WITH SOMETHING MAINSTREAM... BASEBALL OR SOCCER, PERHAPS?

UM...

COULD YOU GIVE ME A HINT?

HMM...

NO. I HATE RUNNING.

I HAVE IT! TRACK!

NO, IT'S NOT SWIMMING. IT'S A MARTIAL ART.

AH! SWIMMING!

IT'S A SPORT YOU DO PRAC-TICALLY NAKED.

NO, IT'S NOT JUDO! YOU WOULDN'T STRIP TO DO JUDO, WOULD YOU?

AH! JUDO!

A MARTIAL ART? HMM... THE MARTIAL ARTS, EH?

SUMO?!

IT'S **SUMO**.

I THINK THE OTHERS HAVE PROBABLY NOTICED BY NOW, BUT...

THEN WHAT IS IT?

YES, I HAD A SLIGHT FEELING IT COULD BE SUMO...BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW FOR SURE.

OF COURSE IT IS! WHY DO YOU THINK?!

OH! SO THAT'S WHY HE'S WEARING THAT *MAWASHI*!

LISTEN, IF YOU DO SUMO...

YOU DON'T GET IT!

IT'S COOL!

TRUE, IT'S NOT SO GLAMOR-OUS, BUT I THINK IT SHOULD BE OK.

BUT WHY?! WHAT'S WRONG WITH SUMO?

SUMO IS OUT OF THE QUES-TION!

AH! SO THAT WAS YOUR PUNCHLINE!

YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO COMPETE IN THE OLYMPICS!

YOU ALL MAKE VALID POINTS...

OUR ROCK-INSPIRED POLICY GOES **AGAINST** SOCIETY! WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO CHANGE TO SUIT THEM!

YEAH! IT'S JUST LOWBROW ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE SWINE OF THE MASSES, RIGHT?

STILL, WHAT'S WRONG WITH NOT COMPETING IN THE OLYMPICS? WHO CARES?

WOW. ROCK SURE IS DIFFI-CULT.

IN THAT SENSE, SUMO WOULD BE RATHER COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.

AND WHILE ROCK CAN INDEED BE ANTI-SOCIETY, IT MUST BE TEMPERED WITH THE DESIRE TO GET ITS MESSAGE OUT INTO THE WORLD.

WHO KNOWS, HE MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE REALLY TALENTED.

IT'D BE PRETTY CRUEL TO MAKE HIM QUIT AFTER HE'S ALREADY GOTTEN SO INVOLVED.

AH. MAKES SENSE.

ON THE OTHER HAND, WHAT IF SUMO'S APPEAL WAS MORE INTERNATIONAL? WOULDN'T THAT WORK?

IF YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT THIS, WE CAN TALK AMONGST OURSELVES ALL WE WANT, BUT WE WON'T LEARN ANYTHING UNLESS WE ASK SOME FOREIGN PEOPLE DIRECTLY. AM I WRONG?

THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU, BOSS! HOW CAN YOU ADMIT DEFEAT BEFORE YOU'VE EVEN TRIED? ISN'T THAT WHAT MAKES A LOSER?!

ARE YOU HEARING YOURSELVES? MAKING SUMO MORE INTERNATIONAL IS SIMPLY IMPOSSIBLE!

JUST HANG OUT IN FRONT OF THE STATION. SOME ARE BOUND TO SHOW UP.

THEN LET'S ASK THEM! BUT I DON'T KNOW ANY FOREIGNERS.

Mr. George

Mr. Robert

Mr. Stuart

YES?

Do you mind?

WE HAVE BROUGHT YOU HERE TO DISCUSS OUR HOPE OF TURNING SUMO INTO AN INTERNATIONAL SPORT. IF YOU WOULD--

THANK YOU ALL FOR COM-ING.

SURE THING.

EXPLAIN IT TO THEM.

YOU SEE WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST?

What is this "sumo"?

WHOEVER GOES OUTSIDE THE RING LOSES.

IT'S BASICALLY A PUSHING CONTEST INSIDE A CIRCULAR RING.

UH, SUMO IS A TRADITIONAL JAPANESE MARTIAL ART.

UH, YES.

That's it?

What?

. . . . . .

IT'S THE BEST KIND OF SPORT FOR BRINGING IN NEW FANS!

THE RULES ARE SIMPLE AND EASY TO REMEM-BER.

YES! THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT!

That seems like a rather simple sport to me.

THAT'S EXACTLY IT.

Is there some other reason it's not so popular?

It is strange.

I see.

WE'RE JUST WONDERING WHY A SPORT AS EASY TO UNDERSTAND AS THIS ISN'T MORE POPULAR OVERSEAS.

I THINK THAT'S WHERE IT ALL STARTS. MOST PEOPLE HAVE NEVER SEEN THAT MANNER OF DRESS.

WHENEVER PEOPLE DO SUMO, THEY HAVE TO DRESS A CERTAIN WAY.

IT'S LIKE THIS.

SQK

SQK

WELL, IT'S NOT SO MUCH "WEARING" AS IT IS STRIPPING.

Ah. So they wear some strange uniform?

WHAT? REALLY?!

That's right.

No, not especially.

THERE YOU HAVE IT. IT REPULSES YOU, DOESN'T IT?

SO THERE'S NO PROBLEM! SUMO CAN BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL SPORT!

WELL. THIS WAS UNEXPECTED!

SO IT'S JUST US JAPANESE WHO GET ALL EMBARRASSED?

FOREIGNERS ARE LESS PUT OFF BY THE *MAWASHI*!

OH. Y-YOU DON'T SAY.

The world isn't that naive.

It's not so simple. We don't just say, "Oh, OK" and then sumo is accepted.

Wait.

I KNEW IT! THE *MAWASHI*!

But this mawashi is most upsetting.

THE TOPKNOT. IT'S NOT BAD, HUH?

Let us assume for now that the topknot is OK.

KOMBU...

If someone suddenly asks us to wrap this thing that looks like kombu around our crotches, we would not be able to agree.

This is to hide a very important area, yes? But it's just a piece of cloth. This makes us uneasy.

OH, SO THAT'S IT.

Yes. And if that reason is inspiring, all the better.

It can be brief, but we would like to hear a reason for wearing this mawashi.

JUST LEAVE IT TO ME. WE'VE ALREADY COME THIS FAR-- THERE'S NO GOING BACK NOW!

WHAT?! COME ON, BOSS. THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT!

FINE. THERE IS SUCH A REASON.

VERY WELL. I WILL NOW BEGIN.

Fine. Let us reserve judgment until we've heard this story.

Ah! Yes, tell us!

THE *MAWASHI* HAS AN ORIGIN STEEPED IN TRADITION. PLEASE LISTEN CLOSELY.

THE TRUTH IS, THE *MAWASHI* IS NOT OF JAPANESE ORIGIN.

Doesn't this story take place in Japan?

Just a moment!

LONG AGO, IN A FARAWAY KINGDOM...

THERE WAS A SPORT THAT RESEMBLED SUMO.

LONG, LONG AGO IN A FARAWAY KINGDOM...

I'M LYING, OF COURSE! DON'T YOU GO GETTING FOOLED, TOO! JUST SIT THERE AND SHUT UP!

WHAT?! IT'S NOT JAPANESE?

BUT IT WAS PERFORMED WEARING ARMOR.

IT WAS, IN FACT, THE ORIGIN OF JAPAN'S SUMO.

THE RULES WERE ALSO ABOUT THE SAME AS SUMO...

TWO COMBATANTS WOULD ENTER A SQUARE RING AND ATTEMPT TO PUSH EACH OTHER OUT.

BUT HE WAS SO STRONG THAT EVEN WITHOUT ARMOR, HE WON TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

IN TRUTH, THE BOY'S FAMILY WAS SO POOR THAT THEY COULDN'T AFFORD A SUIT OF ARMOR...

HE WORE ONLY A PAIR OF DIRTY SLACKS AND A JERSEY, BUT HE WON.

HOWEVER, ONE YOUNG MAN CHOSE TO FIGHT WITHOUT ARMOR.

HE DECIDED TO PRESENT THE YOUTH WITH A SUIT OF ARMOR.

TAKE THIS. IT IS A SUIT OF THE FINEST ARMOR.

. . .

THAT YOUNG MAN IS MOST INCREDIBLE.

SEEING THIS, THE KING WAS DEEPLY MOVED.

THE TRUTH IS, MY FATHER SAYS THAT THE TRULY STRONG DON'T NEED ARMOR. HE HAS ORDERED ME TO FIGHT WITHOUT IT.

WHAT? WHY NOT?

SIR, I'M DEEPLY HONORED... BUT I DO NOT NEED IT.

. . .

BUT I'VE ONLY MADE IT THIS FAR BECAUSE I **WANT** TO BELIEVE THAT WHAT HE SAYS IS TRUE.

OF COURSE, I KNOW MY FAMILY CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY A SUIT OF ARMOR, AND MY FATHER IS JUST MAKING EXCUSES...

I ATTEMPT TO SOLVE EVERYTHING WITH MONEY. IT IS A BAD HABIT INDEED, AND SOMETHING I NEED TO ADDRESS.

SIR...

WELL SAID.

THERE SHALL BE NO MORE ARMOR! I WILL PERMIT ONLY A SINGLE PIECE OF CLOTH TO BE WRAPPED ABOUT THE WAIST.

VERY WELL! AS OF TODAY, THE RULES HAVE CHANGED!

IN SPORTS, THERE MUST BE NO GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR. IT SHOULD BE A COMPETITION OF SKILL, NOTHING MORE.

THUS, THE RULES WERE CHANGED, AND THE PEOPLE GOT TOGETHER TO THINK OF THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO WRAP THEMSELVES WITH A PIECE OF CLOTH.

GOT IT?

Y-YES, SIR!

IN THIS WAY, THE POOR CAN COMPETE AS EQUALS, BASED SOLELY ON THE MERIT OF THEIR SKILL. THIS SHALL BE THE TRUE WAY TO DETERMINE WHO IS STRONGER!

THIS METHOD OF WRAPPING WAS LATER INTRODUCED IN JAPAN, WHERE IT HAS REMAINED EVER SINCE.

THE RESULT WAS TO WRAP IT ABOUT THEIR LOWER BODY AS A FORM OF UNDERWEAR. IT WAS THEN CALLED "MAWASHI," AFTER THE NAME OF THE YOUNG BOY.

.....

IT CAN'T!

THAT'S WHY THE RULE ABOUT THE *MAWASHI* CAN'T BE CHANGED.

.....

IT CAN'T...

CLASP

SO YOU UNDER-STAND NOW?

The spirit of that young boy lives on in the mawashi.

I have been moved. Not slightly, mind you, but enormously.

We shall give sumo our endorsement. You can rest assured.

Yes! Of course!

SO YOU THINK SUMO CAN MAKE IT AS AN OLYMPIC EVENT?

THANK YOU AGAIN!

BYE!

And now we leave. Goodbye!

TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

. . . .

. . . .

YEAH, GREAT JOB, BOSS.

I'M REALLY GLAD THAT WORKED OUT.

BEATS ME.

WHO **WERE** THOSE PEOPLE?

STILL...

**SO "MAWASHI" IS A NAME, IS IT?**

# CHAPTER 251: **IT'S NOT TRUE**

ONE-TWO!
ONE-TWO!

HYAA!

DOSU-
KOI!

HUH?

SHPAK!

≡ HUFF ≡
I CAN'T DO ANY MORE.

URK

GET ON YOUR FEET!

GET UP!

AAH

. . . .

. . . .

PUT SOME MORE SPIRIT INTO IT!

Y-YES, SIR.

I'M SORRY. IT WILL BE JUST A LITTLE LONGER.

HMPH. WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT, LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING...

ISN'T THAT CHANKO READY YET? I'M STARVED.

WELL? LEARNED SOMETHING NEW, DIDN'T YOU?

UH, YES, SIR.

"CHANKO" DOESN'T JUST HAVE TO MEAN CHANKO SOUP--IN THE SUMO WORLD, IT MEANS ANY KIND OF FOOD.

. . . .

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING. HERE'S THE CHANKO.

WE'RE SUMO WRESTLERS! WE'VE GOTTA EAT!

IDIOT!

IT'S JUST, I DON'T THINK IT WOULD GO DOWN WELL AFTER ALL THAT HARD EXERCISE...

WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'? HURRY UP AND EAT.

UM, VICE CAPTAIN?

HNGH

SORRY, SIR.

EATIN' AND GETTING FAT IS PART OF THE JOB! WAHAHA!

BUT HERE, YOU ARE HIS SENIOR. I THINK HE'S GOING A LITTLE FAR IN HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD YOU.

PERHAPS IT CAN'T BE HELPED THAT MASK HAS BECOME RATHER ARROGANT SINCE DEFEATING THE SKILLED COMBATANTS OF OUR RIVAL SCHOOL...

I GUESS IT MAKES ME A LITTLE SAD, BUT IN THE SUMO WORLD, THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES JUNIORS AND SENIORS IS **POWER**. IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH WHO'S BEEN AROUND LONGER.

NO, IT'S FINE.

PERHAPS A GOOD TALKING-TO IS IN ORDER.

RATTLE

NAH, YOU'RE PROBABLY THINKING OF HOW ENTERTAINMENT COMPANIES WORK.

BUT I THOUGHT WHOEVER ENTERED FIRST WAS THE SENIOR, AND ALL THOSE WHO FOLLOW HAVE TO OBEY WITHOUT QUESTION.

HM?

HMPH.

GOOD MORNING.

CAPTAIN.

HEY.

YES, SIR.

WHATEVER. EVERYONE, LISTEN UP. I WANT TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCE-MENT.

.....

WE'LL DO OUR BEST!

I WANT YOU ALL TO KEEP UP WITH YOUR TRAINING. GIVE IT EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT.

WE'RE COMING UP ON THE BIG TOURNAMENT...

I WANT YOU TO ACT AS VICE CAPTAIN AND LEAD US TO VICTORY. I'M COUNTING ON YOU.

HUH?

AND MASK...

HNGH!

AFTER ALL, YOU'D NEVER MAKE IT TO THE TOP WITHOUT ME.

I FIGURED THIS WOULD HAPPEN.

NGH!

TRY MOVIN' UP A COUPLE RANKS BEFORE YOU START GIVIN' ME ADVICE.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE TALKIN' TO?

MASK-SAN, I DON'T CARE IF YOU ARE THE VICE CAPTAIN, THAT SORT OF ATTITUDE ISN'T CALLED FOR.

HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WHEN IT COMES TIME FOR THE TOURNAMENT, I WANT YOU TO TAKE THAT MASK OFF.

HUH?

MASK, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO SAY TO YOU.

IT'S LIKE...WELL, LIKE SUDDENLY BEING TOLD TO CHANGE YOUR BRAND OF CIGARETTES. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, RIGHT? THIS IS THE SAME.

WHAT?

I'M NOT TAKING IT OFF.

WHAT DO YOU THINK I MEAN? I OVERLOOKED IT LAST TIME BECAUSE IT WAS A PRACTICE MATCH, BUT THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN WEAR THAT THING IN THE TOURNAMENT.

WHAT MATTERS IS WINNING, RIGHT? MASKS OR EARRINGS OR WHATEVER SHOULDN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

ANYWAY, THE WHOLE THING'S STUPID. WHAT'S MY MASK GOT TO DO WITH IT ANYWAY?

YOU KNOW WHAT STOPS SUMO FROM GETTING POPULAR? IT'S PEOPLE TALKING OLD-SCHOOL CRAP LIKE THAT.

LOOK, JUST TAKE IT OFF. IT'S AGAINST TRADITION.

THE SAME GOES FOR THIS *MAWASHI*. WHY DO WE HAVE TO WEAR THIS THING ANYWAY? IT'S JUST NOT COOL.

DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT DEEP MEANING THE *MAWASHI* HOLDS?

WHAT? I'M NOT SAYING ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY HERE.

YOU'VE GOTTEN PRETTY FULL OF YOURSELF, HAVEN'T YOU?

FINE. I'LL TELL YOU.

THIS PIECE OF CLOTH HAS SOME DEEP MEANING? BY ALL MEANS, TELL ME. I'M SURE IT'S NO BIG DEAL.

HUH?!

LONG AGO, IN A FARAWAY KINGDOM...

LISTEN CLOSELY.

HUH?

...

...

DIDN'T EXPECT THAT, DID YOU? THE TRUTH IS, THE *MAWASHI* ISN'T REALLY JAPANESE.

WHAT'S SOME FOREIGN PLACE GOT TO DO WITH THIS?

CAPTAIN, WAIT A MINUTE! A FARAWAY KINGDOM? THIS ISN'T SET IN JAPAN?

IT WAS PERFORMED WEARING ARMOR.

BUT UNLIKE JAPAN'S MODERN SUMO...

THERE WAS A SPORT THAT RESEMBLED SUMO.

LONG, LONG AGO IN A FARAWAY KINGDOM...

BUT HE WAS SO STRONG THAT EVEN WITHOUT ARMOR, HE WAS ABLE TO ACHIEVE VICTORY.

IN FACT, THE BOY'S FAMILY WAS SO POOR THAT THEY COULDN'T AFFORD A SUIT OF ARMOR...

HE WORE ONLY A PAIR OF DIRTY SLACKS AND A JERSEY.

HOWEVER, ONE YOUNG MAN CHOSE TO FIGHT WITHOUT ARMOR.

THE BOY REFUSED THE ARMOR, SAYING THAT NOT HAVING TO RELY ON IT HAD ACTUALLY MADE HIM STRONGER.

WHAT WAS THAT?!

MY LORD, THE BOY SAYS HE DOESN'T NEED IT.

I WILL REWARD THAT YOUNG MAN BY SENDING HIM A SUIT OF THE FINEST ARMOR.

SEEING THIS, THE KING WAS VERY MOVED.

THERE SHALL BE NO MORE ARMOR! I WILL PERMIT ONLY A SINGLE PIECE OF CLOTH TO BE WRAPPED ABOUT THE WAIST.

VERY WELL! AS OF TODAY, THE RULES HAVE CHANGED!

I SEE. IN SPORTS, THERE MUST BE NO GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR. IT SHOULD BE A COMPETITION OF SKILL.

AND IT WAS LATER INTRODUCED IN JAPAN.

THIS CLOTH WAS CALLED "MAWASHI," AFTER THE NAME OF THE YOUNG BOY...

Y-YES, SIR!

GOT IT?

IN THIS WAY, THE POOR CAN COMPETE AS EQUALS, BASED SOLELY ON THE MERITS OF THEIR SKILL.

HUH?

CAPTAIN... I WAS WRONG.

SO THAT'S THE STORY BEHIND IT.

.....

HM. I'M GLAD YOU UNDER-STAND.

I'M GOING TO LEARN FROM MAWASHI-KUN'S EXAMPLE! STARTING TOMORROW, I'M LOSING THE ATTITUDE AND TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF!

IT LOOKS LIKE I'VE GONE SHOOTING OFF MY MOUTH WITHOUT KNOWING ANY OF THE MEANING BEHIND OUR TRADITIONS. I'VE SHAMED THE MEMORY OF MAWASHI-KUN.

.....

I'M HAPPY TO HEAR IT.

ME, TOO! ONE DAY, I WANT TO BE EVEN BETTER THAN MAWASHI-KUN!

CAPTAIN! I'M SO MOVED!

.....

OH.

FOUR GREAT ONES MEETING IN PROGRESS

THE NEXT DAY

GOOD MORNING, BOSS!

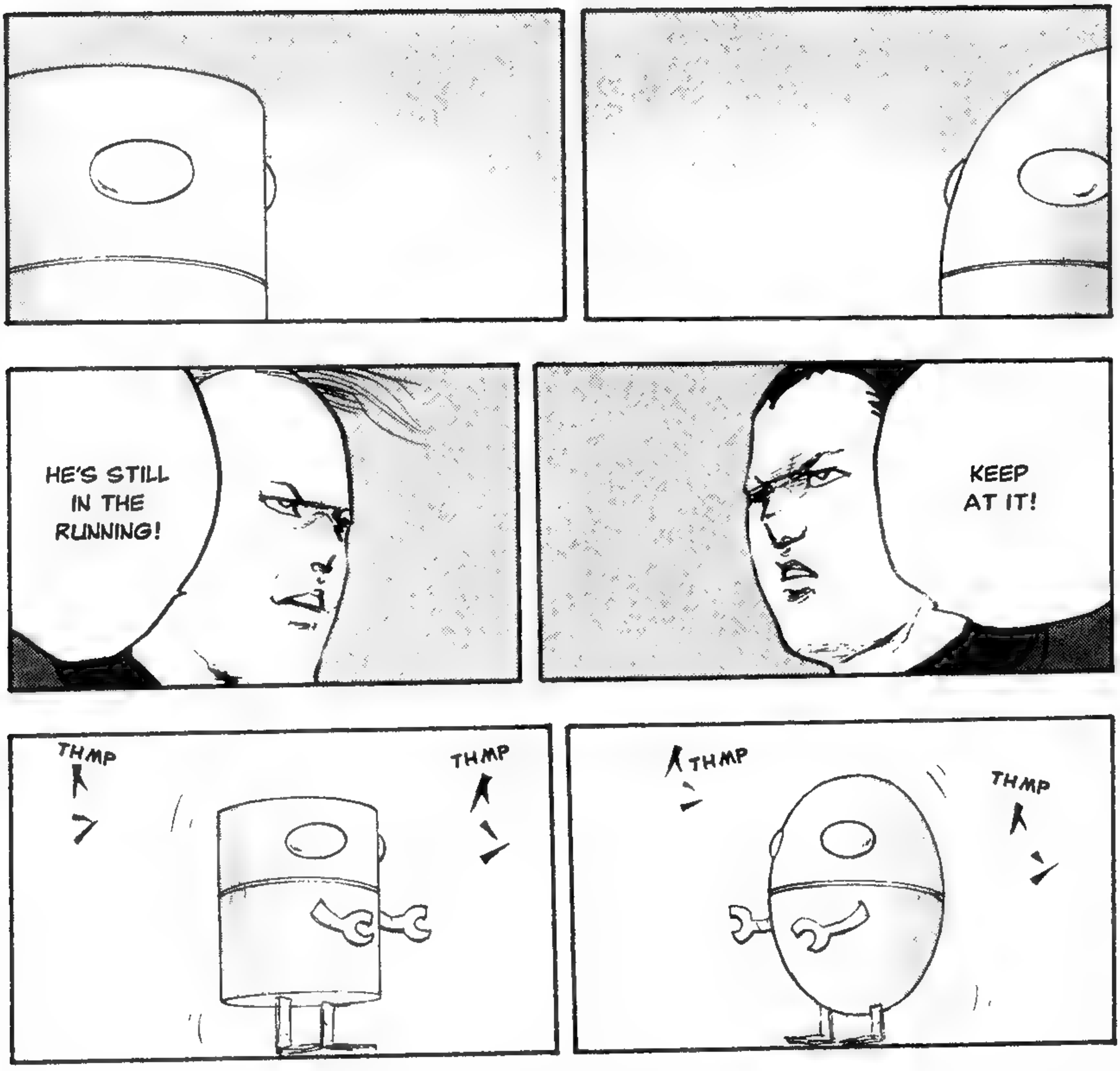
RATTLE

OF COURSE NOT!

THAT STORY ABOUT MAWASHI-KUN WAS TRUE, WASN'T IT?

WAS THERE *REALLY* A MAWASHI-KUN?!

# CHAPTER 252: **ONE MORE TRY**



YES.

HUH? YOU JOINED THE SUMO CLUB?

SHOOT! I LOST!

YEAH. KEEP AT IT AND I'M SURE IT'LL PAY OFF.

GOOD LUCK WITH THAT.

THE MORE I DO IT, THE MORE I LEARN OF SUMO'S DEPTH. IT HAS BECOME QUITE INTERESTING.

GRANTED, I WAS SOMEWHAT **FORCED** TO JOIN, BUT...

I DON'T REALLY KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT, BUT...

YES, AND IT'S RATHER NICE. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN SUMO?

KAMIYAMA, YOU'RE IN THE SUMO CLUB?

SURE. TO A SUMO WRESTLER, CHANKO JUST MEANS ANY KIND OF FOOD. THAT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE.

THEN DO YOU KNOW THE TRUE MEANING OF "CHANKO"?

OH! YOU DO?

I DO KNOW SOME SUMO TERMINOL-OGY.

HUH?

YOUR TURN. DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BEAT THE CHANKO?

AH, SO THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS. THANK YOU. THIS HAS BEEN MOST BENEFICIAL.

YOU DON'T KNOW?! JEEZ...THAT'S WHAT SUMO WRESTLERS SAY TO MEAN THEY'VE EATEN EVERY LAST BITE OF CHANKO.

BEAT THE CHANKO? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

I'M SOR-RY.

THE FUTURE'S NOT LOOKING TOO BRIGHT FOR YOU, YOU KNOW!

HAYASHIDA HERE'S A RANK AMATEUR, BUT HE STILL TAUGHT YOU SOMETHING!

HEY, HOLD ON A MINUTE! YOU'RE IN THE SUMO CLUB BUT YOU DON'T KNOW A DAMN THING, DO YOU?!

AH.

AND THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED.

I'VE COME TO THINK THAT I'M JUST NOT SUITED FOR IT.

I ENTERED THE SUMO CLUB FILLED WITH DETER-MINATION, BUT...

WHAT? BUT WHY?

I THINK I'LL JUST HOLD ON TO THIS FOR NOW.

Le resig

IS WHY...

Letter of resignation

THAT IS WHY...

BESIDES, THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD KNOW WHETHER OR NOT YOU'RE SUITED FOR THIS SO SOON AFTER JOINING.

WHETHER OR NOT YOU KNOW SUMO'S TERMINOLOGY HAS GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. ALL THAT MATTERS IS GETTING INTO THAT RING AND WINNING!

HM?

HEY!

YES, BUT...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. FEELING SHAME CAN HELP PEOPLE GROW, YOU KNOW.

I HAVE A FEELING I WILL DIRTY THE GOOD NAME OF THE SUMO CLUB. I'M SO SORRY...

AH, MASK-KUN.

WHAT D'YOU THINK YOU'RE COMPLAINING ABOUT?!

BUT TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT ME NOW!

HT

I DIDN'T THINK I WAS SUITED FOR SUMO AT FIRST EITHER...

I'M NOT GONNA TRY TO FORCE YOU OR ANYTHING, BUT DO YOU THINK YOU COULD GIVE IT JUST A LITTLE LONGER?

HT

YEAH. IT FEELS SORT OF LIKE I'VE CHANGED JOBS AND FOUND A WHOLE NEW CAREER.

YES. I'D SAY YOU'RE **MOST** WELL-SUITED FOR IT.

HT

AH!

HAVE YOU ALREADY FORGOTTEN ABOUT MAWASHI-KUN?!

COUR-AGE?

THANK YOU. BUT I'M NOT SURE I HAVE ENOUGH COURAGE.

. . . .

I'D HAVE ENDED UP JUST A FAT PIECE OF GARBAGE.

IF THE CAPTAIN HADN'T TOLD ME THAT STORY WHEN HE DID...

THAT STORY MOVED ME! IT GAVE ME COURAGE!

COMPARED TO THAT, NOT KNOWING SUMO TERMINOLOGY IS NOTHING TO GET EMBARRASSED ABOUT!

THAT'S RIGHT! EVERYONE AROUND HIM HAD ARMOR, BUT HE WAS THE ONLY GUY OUT THERE FIGHTING IN HIS JERSEY!

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT. MY WORRIES ARE NOTHING NEXT TO THE HARDSHIPS THAT MAWASHI-KUN ENDURED.

. . . .

WE'RE COUNT-ING ON YOU!

THAT'S THE SPIRIT, KAMIYAMA!

VERY WELL! I WILL LEARN BY MAWASHI-KUN'S EXAMPLE AND TRY MY HARDEST!

HM?

UM, DO YOU MIND?

YUP, THE SPIRIT OF MAWASHI-KUN LIVES ON INSIDE US ALL.

HAH! I GUESS WE ALL HAVE!

SINCE I HEARD THAT STORY, I'VE ACTUALLY BEEN PRACTICING AND TRYING TO BE MORE LIKE MAWASHI-KUN.

HUH?

IT'S JUST A LIE.

THE THING ABOUT THAT STORY WITH MAWASHI-KUN...

THE STORY WAS MADE UP. THERE WAS NO MAWASHI-KUN, AND THERE WAS NO KINGDOM WHERE THE PEOPLE WORE ARMOR AND PRACTICED SUMO.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

IT'S NOT GARBAGE. IT'S THE STORY OF MAWASHI-KUN THAT'S GARBAGE!

I HOPE YOU HAVE SOME PROOF TO BACK UP THAT GARBAGE YOU'RE TALKING.

HEY, DAMMIT!

HIT

HUH?

YANK

GRAB

HUH?!

URK!

!!

LISTEN, RIGHT NOW WE'RE ONLY TALKING AMONGST OURSELVES, SO IT'S NOT A PROBLEM...

THERE ARE JOKES THAT ARE OK AND OTHERS THAT YOU SHOULD NEVER MAKE!

BUT WHAT ABOUT IN THE FUTURE? WHAT IF WE GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL AND GO OUT INTO SOCIETY...

NO! I'M TELLING YOU THIS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD!

ENOUGH! STOP IT, YOU TWO!

HEY! WHAT'S WRONG WITH BEING VICE MANAGER?!

IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, IT MIGHT STOP YOU FROM EVER MAKING IT PAST VICE MANAGER!

AND ONE DAY AT WORK OR SOMETHING WE START TALKING ABOUT MAWASHI-KUN? THAT WOULD BE REALLY EMBARRASSING!

OH, I GET IT. YOU'RE JEALOUS.

NO, I DO HAVE PROOF. IT'S JUST...IT'S A REALLY LONG STORY AND IT WOULD BE HARD TO EXPLAIN.

BUT YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE ANY PROOF. WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE IT'S NOT TRUE?

YOU DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE LIKE MAWASHI-KUN, TO GO OUT AND FIGHT WITHOUT ARMOR. YOU HAVEN'T GOT THE **BALLS**! THAT'S WHY YOU'RE JEALOUS OF HIM!

HUH?!

FINE.

FOR NOW, JUST GO HOME! WE CAN FINISH THIS CONVERSATION LATER. GO IT?

THAT'S ENOUGH!

WHAT?! YOU CANDY-ASS BITCH!

EVEN AFTER EVERYTHING I'VE SAID, HOW CAN YOU STILL NOT GET IT?!

FOUR
GREAT ONES
BREAK TIME

THE
NEXT
DAY

GOOD
MORNING.

ZWSSH

GOOD
MORNING,
BOSS.

I'M REALLY
SORRY
TO KEEP
ASKING YOU
ABOUT IT...

SKLSH

MAWASHI-
KUN
AGAIN?!

UM, ABOUT
THAT STORY...

THAT'S WHY I HAVE
TO MAKE SURE IF IT'S
TRUE OR NOT, ONCE
AND FOR ALL.

BUT THAT MAWASHI-KUN
STORY HAS PUT ME IN
DANGER OF WRECKING
MY SOCIAL LIFE!

WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT...

DO YOU REALLY THINK THERE COULD BE A COUNTRY WHERE THE PEOPLE PUT ON ARMOR AND DO SUMO? COULD THERE HAVE BEEN SOME FOREIGN BOY WITH A NAME LIKE MAWASHI?! OF COURSE NOT!

JUST CALM YOURSELF AND THINK ABOUT IT RATIONALLY.

OH...

AS I'VE TOLD YOU AGAIN AND AGAIN, I MADE THAT STORY UP IN ABOUT FIVE SECONDS. I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER HALF THE DETAILS MYSELF!

IF THERE REALLY WAS A COUNTRY WHOSE SPORT WAS THE BASIS FOR SUMO, NHK* WOULD HAVE DONE A SPECIAL ALL ABOUT IT!

*JAPAN'S PUBLIC BROADCASTING STATION.

I'M TELLING YOU, IF IT WERE TRUE, NHK WOULD HAVE DONE A DOCUMENTARY ON IT A LONG TIME AGO! AND NHK'S DOCUMENTARIES ARE INCREDIBLE--THERE'S NO WAY THEY WOULD HAVE OVERLOOKED SOMETHING LIKE THIS!

WILL YOU STOP IT AL-READY?

REALLY?! WOW. MAYBE IT'S TRUE AFTER ALL.

IT'S JUST, I HEARD THE SAME STORY SOMEWHERE ELSE, SO I STARTED TO THINK MAYBE IT WAS TRUE.

A GUY FROM NHK SHOWED UP!

UM, JUST RIGHT NOW...

WHAT IS IT?

BOSS! THIS IS BIG!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! IT WAS TRUE AFTER ALL!

THEY'RE HERE! THEY'RE HERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION ON THE STORY!

WHAT?

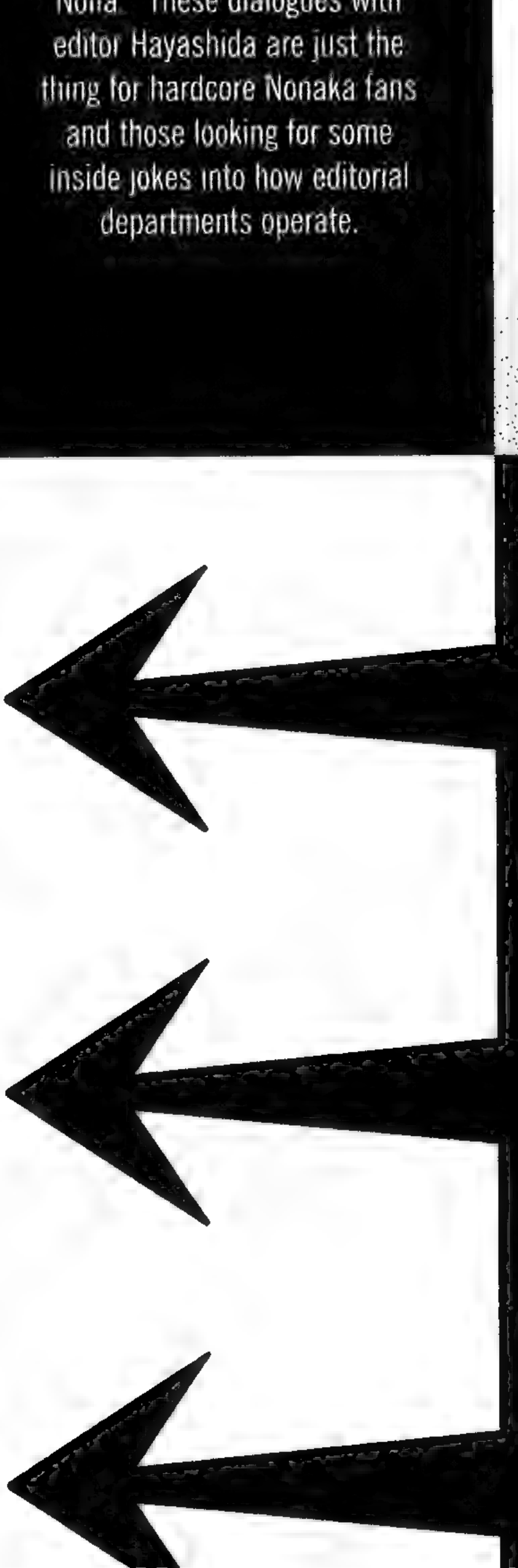
TELL HIM WE DON'T HAVE A TV!

ACTUALLY, HE JUST WANTS US TO PAY OUR SUB-SCRIPTION FEE.

**NHK HAS HAD ITS SHARE OF SCANDALS, BUT WE SHOULD STILL PAY OUR SUBSCRIPTION FEES.**

**VOLUME 12 ★ THE END**

In answer to the fervent expectations of a small subset of readers, we present yet another installment of "Love Nona." These dialogues with editor Hayashida are just the thing for hardcore Nonaka fans and those looking for some inside jokes into how editorial departments operate.



# LAST-MINUTE INSERT!
# SPECIAL BONUS MANGA
# LOVE NONA

Bringing you yet another controversial story!
(But not how you're thinking.)

# A COMMENT ON THIS INSTALLMENT

To give a bit of explanation behind this story, it was drawn in answer to a request for two simultaneous installments of *Cromartie High School* to run in Weekly Shonen Magazine.

EDITOR: The editor-in-chief has asked you to provide two installments for the next issue! Isn't that great!

NONAKA: Huh?! No way. It's too much hassle.

EDITOR: What? !! Hold on a minute! Can't you try to be a bit more motivated/

NONAKA: Fine. How about an installment of "Love Nona"?

EDITOR: Yes. Please!

And that's how it started. The plan to publish two installments at once. However, it ended up being too much of a pain, and I began a series of clandestine meetings with my editor to come up with a plan to reduce the number of pages. Which of course gives one the feeling that, if there was time to engage in all those meetings, it would have been faster to simply pen the second installment. Then...

"I've got it! Both installments can begin with the same manga!" "Ah! And I wouldn't have to draw the same pages twice!"

Thus, the first three pages of "Love Nona" are exactly the same as those in Chapter 244. Go on, compare them! They're the same. (LOL)

Incidentally, when this was first published in *Shonen Magazine*, it ran directly following Chapter 244. Because that chapter and this installment both begin with the same manga, the editorial staff yelled at me, saying, "It'll just look like a printing error!" Uh...

CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL
SUMO CLUB

'SIR.

WELL, LET'S START TRAINING.

110

FWAP

YES, SIR!

I WANT YOU TO COME AT ME AS HARD AS YOU CAN.

LET'S START WITH CHARGE-AND-DEFLECT DRILLS.

BWACK

DOSUKOI!!*

*AN INTIMIDATING YELL ASSOCIATED WITH SUMO WRESTLERS.

THOMP

AAGH!

NOT GOOD ENOUGH!

BWACK

DOSUKOI!

STILL NOT GOOD ENOUGH!

THOMP

AAGH!

HUFF HUFF

'SIR.

TAKE FIVE.

WELL

WHY AM I SO TIRED?

I DON'T MEAN TO SOUND LIKE I'M COMPLAINING, BUT I'M PRETTY WORN OUT.

WELL, HAYASHIDA-KUN? WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HOW THIS LATEST INSTALLMENT TURNED OUT?

MANGA ARTIST EIJI NONA

K-TONK

WHAT?

UM, I GET THE FEELING IT'S EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE LAST ONE.

This sumo-related humor.

. . . .

HERE.

LET ME SEE THAT.

IF YOU DON'T MIND MY ASKING, IS THIS PART OF SOME NEW APPROACH OR OBJECTIVE?

I THOUGHT AS MUCH.

HUH? IT **IS** EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE LAST ONE.

NOW WAIT JUST A MOMENT!

NO, THE PUNCH LINE IS THE SAME AS BEFORE, TOO.

. . . . . .

FOR EXAMPLE, THE BASIC FLOW OF THE STORY IS THE SAME BUT THE PUNCH LINE IS DIFFERENT.

YES. OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, I'VE DRAWN THE EXACT SAME INSTALLMENT TWICE IN A ROW.

SO YOU'RE SAYING I'VE RECEIVED THE EXACT SAME INSTALLMENT TWICE IN A ROW?

ENOUGH JOKING, PLEASE.

IF I WAS JUST DRAWING THE SAME THING OVER AGAIN, IT WOULD GO RATHER SMOOTHLY, WOULDN'T IT?

I WAS WONDERING WHY I WAS ABLE TO CRANK IT OUT PRETTY QUICKLY THIS TIME...

REALLY? STAND-UP COMEDIANS USE THE SAME JOKES OVER AND OVER AGAIN. ISN'T IT THE SAME?

IT CAN'T BE DONE!

USING THE SAME MATERIAL TWICE IS JUST INAPPROPRIATE.

LISTEN, WE'RE ALL INDIVIDUALS. YOU ARE YOU...

WILL YOU PLEASE STOP SPEAKING FOOLISHNESS?

I DON'T THINK IT SHOULD BE A PROBLEM IF I DO IT, TOO.

I'VE BEEN DOING SERIAL COMICS FOR ABOUT 10 YEARS NOW.

I KNOW WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM. I REALLY DO.

STAND-UP COMEDIANS ARE STAND-UP COMEDIANS AND MANGA ARTISTS ARE MANGA ARTISTS.

THAT'S TRUE TO A CERTAIN EXTENT. I'M WILLING TO GRANT YOU THAT.

IT CAN'T BE HELPED IF THE SAME KIND OF STORY OCCASIONALLY COMES UP. ACTUALLY, IT'D BE PRETTY STRANGE IF THAT **DIDN'T** HAPPEN.

REALLY? I'M THE GUY THAT'S WRITING THIS STUFF AND EVEN I FORGOT. DON'T YOU THINK THE READERS WILL FORGET, TOO?

NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, THE READERS ARE GOING TO REMEMBER!

BUT TO REPLICATE A STORY YOU DID JUST LAST WEEK? NO, IT SIMPLY CAN'T HAPPEN.

YOU KNOW, YOU'VE GOTTEN DOWNRIGHT HOSTILE LATELY. DON'T YOU THINK YOU COULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE ATTITUDE?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I'M ALWAYS SERIOUS.

WILL YOU PLEASE TAKE THIS MORE SERIOUSLY?

WHAT? NO, I'M JUST TRYING TO POINT OUT THINGS TO BE CAREFUL OF. IT'S PART OF MY JOB AS AN EDITOR.

EVERY TIME WE HAVE A MEETING, YOU'RE ALWAYS BUTTING IN WITH COMMENTS LIKE, "YOU'VE USED THAT JOKE BEFORE." IT'S REALLY GETTING ON MY NERVES.

WITH YOU ALWAYS YAPPING AT ME TO CHANGE THIS AND THAT, YOU COULD ACTUALLY BE CAUSING MY CREATIVE RANGE TO SHRINK!

DON'T YOU EVER THINK YOUR POINTING THINGS OUT COULD HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT?

I KNOW OF HIM, YES. HE'S GOING THROUGH A SUDDEN SURGE OF POPULARITY RIGHT NOW. HE HAS A LOT OF PROMISE...HIS WORK RUNS IN A DIFFERENT MAGAZINE THOUGH.

SPEAKING OF, DO YOU KNOW AKATSUKA-KUN, THAT NEW COMEDY MANGA AUTHOR?

APPARENTLY, HE USES THE SAME MATERIAL OVER AND OVER AND DOESN'T GIVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT.

I READ AN INTERVIEW WITH HIM NOT LONG AGO...

I THINK HE'S REALLY GOING TO COME INTO HIS OWN. THAT'S JUST MY EDITORIAL INTUITION.

YES. SO IT WOULD SEEM THAT WHEN HE HAS MEETINGS WITH HIS EDITORS, NO ONE MAKES TACTLESS COMMENTS LIKE, "YOU'VE USED THIS MATERIAL BEFORE."

OH. REALLY?

HMM, YOU MIGHT HAVE A POINT. I DO THINK IT'S BEST TO PUT AS FEW RESTRAINTS ON HUMOR AS POSSIBLE... IT SEEMS I'VE BECOME SOMEWHAT OBSTINATE.

IT'S THAT SORT OF EASYGOING MENTALITY THAT'S ALLOWED HIM TO BECOME SO POPULAR. DON'T YOU THINK, HAYASHIDA?

LOOK, THIS IS WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. YOUR BIG FLAW IS THAT YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO GO AND SWEAT THE DETAILS. THAT KIND OF BY-THE-NUMBERS ATTITUDE JUST GETS IN THE WAY OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS!

BUT IN EXCHANGE, I WANT YOU TO MAKE THIS ONE A BIT FUNNIER. IT CAN'T BE EXACTLY THE SAME AS BEFORE.

FINE. I'LL LET YOU RUN WITH THE SAME MATERIAL AS LAST TIME.

I HARDLY THINK MAKING IT MORE BORING COULD BE A GOOD THING.

IF ANYTHING, WE COULD MAKE IT EVEN MORE BORING THAN BEFORE.

PERSONALLY, I THINK GOING WITH THE EXACT SAME MATERIAL AS LAST TIME IS JUST FINE.

EVEN IF WE THINK SOMETHING IS BORING, IF IT'S INTERESTING FOR THE READERS, THEN WE'VE SUCCEEDED. THAT'S THE WAY THE WORLD WORKS!

LISTEN, WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT WHAT'S BORING AND WHAT'S NOT?

ALRIGHT, FINE.

JUST LET ME RUN THE INSTALLMENT THE WAY IT IS.

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO SAY IT? SOMETHING YOU THINK IS BORING COULD STILL BE INTERESTING FOR THE READERS. AND THAT'S WHAT COUNTS. IT'S NOT LIKE I'M WRITING MANGA TO MAKE **YOU** HAPPY.

BUT AS YOUR EDITOR, I--

YOU DON'T QUIT, DO YOU?!

IF THAT'S THE CASE, IT'S NO DIFFERENT FROM JUST REPRINTING YOUR PREVIOUS INSTALL-MENT.

BUT IF WE RUN THIS, WON'T IT JUST LOOK LIKE I'VE MADE A MISTAKE AND RUN THE SAME THING TWICE IN A ROW?

RIGHT?

LOOK, JUST RUN IT! IF YOU DON'T GET ANY COMPLAINTS FROM THE READERS, IT MEANS THERE'S NO PROBLEM.

VERY WELL.

RATTLE

JUST RUN THAT, DO A READER SURVEY AND THEN WAIT FOR THE AN-SWER.

GOOD. I'M GLAD YOU FINALLY SEE REASON. AND JUST SO IT'S SAID, IT'S NOT LIKE I'M TRYING TO CUT CORNERS OR ANYTHING.

TRUE ENOUGH.

AH.

WE HAVE THE RESULTS OF THE READER SURVEY.

ONE WEEK LATER

K-TONK

Number of readers who complained about this manga: 0 out of 1,000

FIRST OFF, PLEASE LOOK AT THE TALLY WRITTEN ON THE FRONT OF THE SHEET.

Number of readers who skipped ahead without reading this manga: 1,000 out of 1,000

COR-RECT.

AH. SO THERE WASN'T A SINGLE COMPLAINT.

YES, IT IS AS YOU SAY.

THIS MANGA IS RUNNING IN YOUR MAGAZINE. THERE'S GOTTA BE A PROBLEM SOMEWHERE, RIGHT?

I HATE TO BE THE ONE TO SAY THIS, BUT...

COR-RECT.

HOLD ON A MINUTE. YOU MEAN THERE'S NOT A SINGLE PERSON WHO'S READING THIS?

PLEASE DON'T LET IT GET TO YOU. WE'LL JUST TRY HARDER NEXT TIME.

HOW COULD THINGS COME TO THIS?!

I NEVER DREAMED THAT WE'D NOT EVEN HAVE A SINGLE READER...

NO ONE'S READING THIS! THEN NATURALLY NO ONE WOULD COMPLAIN IF WE RAN THE SAME THING TWICE.

SURE.

I'LL BE LEAVING NOW.

NOT A SINGLE READER. WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT...

SHP

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

I GUESS THAT MEANS I CAN USE THE SAME MATERIAL NEXT WEEK, TOO.

NO, YOU CAN'T!

THE END

**Even the mighty Takeshi Hokuto must one day choose his successor. Know then that I have selected my henchman (whatever his name is) for this great honor... but first, he must infiltrate the depths of this wretched school and learn more of the phenomenon that is "sumo." And he shall do so disguised as Hayashida, which will no doubt provide added entertainment for the masses.**

# CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL

VOL.13

**It commands your purchase!**